This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

+ *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.

+ *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.

+ *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.

+ *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at `http://books.google.com/`

UNIVERSITY of MICHIGAN
GENERAL LIBRARY
OCTAVIA WILLIAMS BATES
BEQUEST

828
H861-
6t
v.2

UNIVERSITY of MICHIGAN
GENERAL LIBRARY
OCTAVIA WILLIAMS BATES
BEQUEST

828
H861-
6t
v.2

TALES

OF

THE COLONIES.

BY

JOHN HOWISON,

OF THE HONOURABLE EAST INDIA COMPANY'S SERVICE,

AUTHOR OF "SKETCHES OF UPPER CANADA," ETC.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

SABLEGROVE CONTINUED.

ONE FALSE STEP.—THE COLAMBOLO.

LONDON:

HENRY COLBURN AND RICHARD BENTLEY,

NEW BURLINGTON STREET

1830.

SABLEGROVE

CONTINUED.

Bates
Museum
12-6-46
5-7029

SABLEGROVE

CONTINUED.

CHAPTER IV.

GERALD, on regaining all his perception, found himself in the same chamber which he had formerly occupied while at Sablegrove. He now began to experience the first symptoms of a tropical fever; but he erroneously imagined that his sensations were the result of past illness, and that the terrible, but indistinct, recollections which haunted his mind owed their existence to the perturbed dreams generally attendant upon sickness. This belief, however, was weakened, when he considered the connexion existing between the incidents that dwelt in his memory, and reflected upon the vividness and pertinacity with which they recurred, in spite of all his ef-

D 1-11-47 GVS

forts to banish them from his recollection, as mere nocturnal visions.

His only attendant was a negro boy, who was too young to give him any accurate information respecting the events of the last few days; and it occurred to him that Unda would be likely to be able to satisfy him on this point, besides proving a useful nurse. The boy offered to go to her hut, and request her attendance, provided Mr. Marnledge did not object to his doing so; and, in the course of a few hours, Gerald was gratified by seeing Unda, who willingly undertook to exert her medical skill in counteracting the progress of his disease. She at once communicated all that he most wished and feared to know with certainty, and described to him the burial of Letitia Everhard, and the state of torpor in which he himself had been found on the morning of her death.

"And what is now going on here?" inquired Gerald. "Where are Mr. Marnledge and Mrs. Dittersdorf? This house is so quiet that I should almost suppose that it had no inhabitant but myself."

"Things are much changed within these few

days," replied Unda. "My master and mistress had dreadfully high words, when they learned that Miss Letitia was drowned. Mrs. Dittersdorf now lives almost alone; for he keeps himself shut up, night and day. They seldom see each other, and he gives no orders about the estate; but lets every thing go as it may."

"Oh, that I had trusted our escape to yourself!" cried Gerald, "I should not then have been reduced to my present state of misery. Now I feel no interest in any thing, and care not what befalls me. I have a violent throbbing in my temples, and sometimes all my senses seem to be, as it were, suddenly swept away; after which, they return, one by one, each bearing along with it a hideous image or fearful idea."

"Don't disturb yourself," said Unda, "you are about to have the fever. I will be your physician. I have carried many a one through it."

Unda proved to be right in her conjectures, for the evening saw Gerald tossing on a sick bed, racked with pain, and unconscious of every thing around him. He continued four days in this state, and then his disease abated, and left him

weak and exhausted. Unda had been most assiduous in her attentions, and he felt that it was to her skill and care that he owed his convalescence, which, however, threatened to be very protracted, more from the state of his mind, than from his extreme bodily debility.

For ten days Gerald was unable to leave his chamber. Worn down by tropical disease, depressed in spirits, and the victim of gloomy remembrances and melancholy anticipations, his recovery was slow, and, as it were, coercive. He neither had energy nor inclination to promote it in any way, and tranquilly resigned himself to every sensation and impression that presented itself, whatever its nature might be. In vain did Unda tell him to walk about the room, for the sake of exercise, or to keep awake during the day, that his sleep might be more profound at night. He perceived the propriety of her advice, but could not command resolution to follow it. He sat for hours in his chair, looking from the window, or watching the movements of an insect upon the wall, or listlessly turning over the pages of a dull pamphlet upon the cultivation of sugar, which he had found in

his apartment. A sense of intolerable weakness and relaxation often would lead him to extend himself upon his bed, when a deadening sleep would overpower him for a short time, from which he would awake hot, feverish, and stupified by a headache.

No person of any kind, excepting Unda and the boy already mentioned, ever visited him, or even appeared to come near his chamber; and every succeeding day so closely resembled the previous one, that he soon became almost insensible to the divisions of time. On awaking in the morning, his earliest impressions were those of disgust and impatience at the prospect of the long and weary day that was to be passed in inaction and vacuity. Getting out of bed, he watched the rising sun, from the time that its copper-coloured glow first appeared upon the horizon, to that when its full, unclouded, and well defined orb came into view, with a startling glare and suddenness, that formed a fit introduction to the fiery and unrelenting career which it was to run before its nightly declension took place. The close, warm morning was slightly varied by the bringing in of breakfast; after which, Gerald

experienced considerable relief, and even a temporary animation, from the sea breeze, which always commenced about ten o'clock. However, as the day advanced, his spirits flagged, and evening was to him a season of gloom and depression. The deepening twilight brought no blazing fire, no social circle, no enlivening amusement; but, as the darkness increased, filthy cockroaches crept from their holes and ran along the walls, musquittoes entered the room in clouds, and kept up a ceaseless humming, and the air became still and suffocatingly oppressive; while a nervous irritation affected his frame, and rendered sleep, or even common tranquillity, unattainable.

It was at such times as these, that Gerald, while tossing from one side of his bed to the other, felt that, even after all his misfortunes, he could still be comparatively happy, were he under an European sky, and in the enjoyment of that health, bodily vigour, and mental vivacity, from which the residents of a tropical climate are wholly debarred, in whatever circumstances they may happen to be placed. His thoughts dwelt incessantly upon the genial atmosphere, cool winds, and mild sunshine of his native

country; and he began to picture to himself the incidents of his homeward voyage, and the varied series of delightful impressions which would attend and succeed his arrival in England.

Gerald had confined himself to his chamber for about a fortnight, when he, one evening, resolved to venture out to take the air in the neighbourhood of the house. A copious shower had fallen that morning, and washed the dust from the grass and leaves of the trees. Every thing looked fresh and green, and the soft moist breeze came blandly upon his cheek, and its cooling touch seemed to permeate his whole frame. Within three hundred yards of the mansion, there was a little circular eminence, shaded by mango trees, and surrounded with clumps of shrubbery, which screened it from being overlooked by the house, and rendered it a comparatively sequestered spot. Thither he directed his steps, for he had often before visited the place. But its appearance was now changed, for an accumulation of withered leaves had been removed, and in its centre was a small mound, covered with squares of turf, which had not yet united together, and protected by a rude kind of

railing formed of bamboos, and painted black. Gerald had viewed all this but a few moments, when a conviction rose in his mind that it was the grave of Letitia. No renewed burst of sorrow agitated his heart; but he calmly seated himself at the foot of one of the mango trees, and leaned his head against its trunk.

The sun was now setting, and the western horizon, to a great height up the zenith, blazed with crimson light. But the luminary himself was hidden by a dark thick cloud, too dense to be penetrated or affected by his rays, except at the edges, which were of a defined and glowing redness, that gave the idea of an intensity both of heat and light. The centre of the cloud, which lay directly over the sun's disk, was perforated by an oval opening, through which streamed a column of dazzling radiance, the whole having the appearance of an immense and supernatural eye, engaged in taking cognizance of what was going on upon the surface of the earth. Towards the north and south, the clouds had formed themselves into ranges of lofty and perpendicular columns, of different heights, colours and sizes. Some of these terminated in

sharp points, of brilliant whiteness; while others presented an equality of breadth throughout their whole altitude, but were surmounted by gigantic and fantastically shaped fragments, resembling capitals, which trembled, tottered, and changed their positions, without any apparent impulse, and sometimes rolled off their supporting shafts, and were noiselessly precipitated amongst the black and convoluted masses which formed the supporting stratum of the whole. The sky, towards the eastern hemisphere, assumed successively a purple, a violet, and a pale green colour; and the last faded into a delicate and transparent blue, in which the scarcely distinguishable stars shone with a pendulousness and trembling fluidity of light, which gave them the appearance of being about to dissolve in the surrounding atmosphere.

Gerald had not been seated more than a quarter of an hour, when he heard approaching footsteps; and, on looking up, saw Mr. Marnledge within a few yards of him. He evidently had not before observed him, for he started and looked embarrassed, but bowed slightly, and said "good evening." Gerald returned the saluta-

tion, and some moments of silence succeeded, during which he took an opportunity of narrowly scrutinizing Mr. Marnledge, who was much changed in personal appearance since they had last met, being now pale and haggard, and slovenly in his dress, and of melancholy and listless deportment.

"I am happy, Mr. Berens, to find you thus far recovered;" said he, in a low tone. "Though I did not visit you, during your illness, (for that would have been useless,) I made daily inquiries respecting the state of your health. It will be better that neither of us should allude to the past. Pray, what are your present intentions?"

"As yet," replied Gerald, "I find myself too feeble and unhinged to be able to decide upon any thing. My first wish, of course, is to quit Sablegrove. That being effected, chance, probably, will regulate my future movements."

"You shall meet with no interruption from me;" said Mr. Marnledge, with a look of suppressed shame and mortification. "I only regret that I cannot restore your papers and pro-

perty, all which, having been deposited in the building in the marsh, were carried away by the disastrous flood. But, Mr. Berens, though I have been hurried away, by my impetuous passions, to commit an act of injustice deeply affecting yourself, you ought to remember that you now are in precisely the same state that you were when I first received you into my house. Then you had lost every thing, and at this moment you actually possess all that you ever have done, since your arrival at Sablegrove."

"More, more!" exclaimed Gerald; "since coming here, I have acquired a knowledge of the extremes of vice and virtue. Farewell! My strength fails me."

Gerald, on returning to his chamber, viewed it with more dislike than he had ever before done. This short ramble had awakened in his mind a lively sense of the joys of liberty and motion, and made him impatient at the idea of submitting to one other day's confinement; but Unda endeavoured to overrule such feelings, and succeeded in convincing him that, in the state in which he then was, the slightest fatigue or exposure to the sun would be followed by a certain

and dangerous relapse. He, therefore, yielded to her arguments, and contented himself with planning how he should proceed to St. Thomas's, and in what manner he should subsist when he got there; but, even when most absorbed in speculations of the kind, his confidence would fail, and a cloud would intervene itself between the contrivance and execution of his schemes, ominously overshadowing the future, and, as it were, concealing the destiny that awaited him.

Gerald now walked out every evening, and found himself daily gaining strength. He gradually extended his rambles from the immediate neighbourhood of the house, to the most remote parts of the estate, the whole of which wore an aspect of neglect and disorder. Weeds had been allowed to spring up in profusion among the crops; and, in some places, after their extermination had been attempted, or partially effected, the work had been abandoned, apparently through caprice or forgetfulness; and the implements formerly employed in it, lay scattered upon the ground. Cattle were forcing their way through the fences, with discontented lowings; and broken

or half repaired carts stood in the middle of the roads, on which groups of negroes were strolling listlessly, with idle indifference. Gerald, on inquiring for the overseer, found that he was dangerously ill, and that he had not been able to attend at the plantation for a considerable time, and that Mr. Marnledge never even visited the estate, or gave its affairs the slightest superintendence.

A week elapsed from the time of Gerald's interview with Mr. Marnledge, without his again seeing him. Neither did he ever happen to meet Mrs. Dittersdorf any where, or even to hear her voice. His meals were regularly brought into his apartment, and he would have supposed that he himself formed the only inmate of the mansion, had not Unda told him that it was otherwise. But this state of gloomy tranquillity was not to continue any longer.

One evening, Gerald heard the sound of voices, in strong altercation, in Mrs. Dittersdorf's chamber, and could easily distinguish that they were those of the lady herself and Mr. Marnledge. After a little time, a door was suddenly thrown

open, and Gerald was startled by approaching footsteps, and by the exclamation, "I can endure this no longer; I will seek protection from Mr. Berens." He sprang out of his room, and encountered Mrs. Dittersdorf in the adjoining veranda. Her countenance expressed fear and anger, and she continued to look behind her, till Mr. Marnledge appeared carrying a lamp.

"Oh! Mr. Berens," cried she, "you may imagine what I am reduced to, when I come to solicit protection from you, who have every cause to hate me. But your nature is so generous that my confidence will not be misplaced. That man renders my life miserable. He keeps me in constant terror. He has now struck me."

"Or, rather, intended to do so," said Mr. Marnledge. "What claim have you to be exempted from blows, or any other degradation, however vile?"

"Were any one but yourself to address such language to me," replied Mrs. Dittersdorf, "I should listen in silence, or answer that I deserved it; but, how easily can I retort upon you, —you, who have been the means of bringing me so low as I now am. Mr. Berens, to you I look,—

to you I appeal. I am now helpless, and destitute of protection. No one here has any regard for me. I shall become desperate. I am still a woman, and to be deserted by every one, in a place like this, is dreadful to my feelings."

"Madam," answered Gerald, "you may rest assured that no person shall be permitted either to maltreat or insult you, in my presence, or with my knowledge, but I can promise nothing further."

"Discussions of this kind are unnecessary," said Mr. Marnledge, with gloomy indifference. "To-morrow morning I shall quit this house, and take up my abode in the store-room upon the plantation. Mrs. Dittersdorf is perfectly at liberty to make what domestic arrangements she pleases, for I do not intend ever again to disturb her,—always under condition that she does not interfere with me."

Gerald, unwilling to prolong the conversation, withdrew to his chamber, and peace was restored for the night. Next morning, Mr. Marnledge fulfilled his promise, by removing to the plantation, with a small quantity of furniture. The upper part of the wooden building, there, afforded very

good accommodations; and these, and a small number of domestic servants, rendered him totally independent of the establishment at Sablegrove, where he ceased even to take his meals.

A few days after this arrangement had taken place, one of the negroes, whose excellent character and superior knowledge had advanced him to a high place in his master's confidence, and given him a degree of control over his fellow-slaves, came to Gerald, attended by a number of the latter, and said, "To-morrow will be kept as a holiday on all the estates in the island, and it has always hitherto been so on this; but we have received no orders or permission to that effect, and we wish to know whether we are to be allowed to leave off work and enjoy ourselves as is usual at this time. Mr. Marnledge will not see any one, and therefore we cannot ask him, and the overseer is too sick to attend to any thing. So, sir, we have come to you upon the subject, because the management of the estate seems now to be in your hands. Will you allow us a holiday, to-morrow, as is customary, and give us the usual quantity of goods and spirits from the stores to make merry with?"

"Make merry!" repeated Gerald, and then recollecting himself, he said, "You have my permission to be as idle as you please to-morrow, and you shall receive every thing that is usually given upon such occasions." The negroes expressed themselves highly pleased with this declaration, and hurried away to make preparations for their holiday amusement, which commenced next morning at dawn, when the plantation was entirely deserted; all the slaves and their wives and children having assembled together, to pursue their sports, upon a shady spot of ground near the edge of the salt-marsh. In the course of the day, Gerald received intimation that his presence, as a spectator, was requested in the evening; and, little as he felt inclined to witness the turbulent gaieties of the negroes, he resolved to accede to their wishes, because, though already very popular among them, he thought it desirable that he should continue to cultivate their good will, because it was likely that he should soon have to put it to the test, by requiring assistance from some of them.

About sunset, Gerald joined the sable groupe, and found a seat provided for him, from which he

could see all that passed. The principal part of the evening's amusement was to consist of successive representations of particular customs, prevailing in those districts of Africa from which the exhibitors respectively came. The first performers were natives of Mandara, who came forward to exemplify a singular usage known amongst their own people, viz. that if a slave, wishing to belong to any particular person, succeeds in cutting off his right ear, the latter is obliged, by the laws of the country, to purchase his mutilator.

The exhibition commenced by a young man, in the character of a slave, rushing into the circle formed by the spectators, and being followed by an individual who represented his master, and who affected to be highly incensed against him. The pursuit lasted some time, but, at length, the master overtook the slave and proceeded to beat him severely. The latter then knelt down, and requested that he might be allowed to change owners, as he never could hope to please his present one; but his master refused to consent to this, and the parties separated. In the next scene, the maltreated slave appeared, in company

with one of his comrades, to whom he complained bitterly of the cruel usage to which he was daily exposed, and told him his resolution to obtain a change of masters, by resorting to the method of effecting this which was sanctioned and practised in the country. He then borrowed a knife from his friend, and went to conceal himself among the brushwood, in order that he might have an opportunity of springing out upon the first wealthy looking person that passed along, and cutting off his ear, and thereby forcing him to become his purchaser. Presently, two men walked across the circle, having their faces covered up, as is customary with travellers in the interior of Africa. The slave darted from the thicket, and succeeded in possessing himself of the right ear of one of them, before he could make any resistance; but, the next moment, discovered, to his chagrin and astonishment, that the individual whom he had thus successfully assaulted, was the very master who had cruelly treated him, and from whose service he wished to withdraw himself. A scene of violence and recrimination then ensued between the parties, and it was at length agreed that the affair should

be brought before the almamy of the village, and argued in his presence. This constituted the fourth scene, and long speeches were delivered, by the mutilated master and by his refractory slave, in defence of themselves. The almamy, having heard both sides, turned to the former, and said, "By the laws of our country, you are bound to purchase this man; but, as you cannot buy him from yourself, and as there is no one entitled to receive his price from you but himself, you will please to pay the amount to him." This decision excited murmurs of surprise; but the almamy caused the money to be paid into the hands of the slave, and then addressed him thus: "By assaulting your master, you have exposed yourself to severe punishment; but, as it was done in ignorance of his person, you shall be let off, by paying a fine to him equal to your own value. Therefore, return to him the money which you have now received. He is to consider this a compensation for the loss of his ear; and you, of course, have also had justice, being now, according to law, the property of him whom you have mutilated."

The next exhibition represented a custom pre-

valent in Lagos, on the western coast of Africa, —that of annually sacrificing a young virgin, to propitiate the seasons, and insure abundant crops. A negro girl, in the character of the victim, was brought forward, attended by her lamenting relations, who employed themselves in decorating her person, and chanting death-songs, to prepare her for her fate. To these was added the noise of various musical instruments, and the whole assembly was so deeply engrossed by the spectacle that, for a considerable time, no one observed a glare of light and an ascending column of smoke, in the western sky. At length, one of the negroes called out, "The plantation-house is surely on fire!" and turned the eyes of all in that direction. The amusements were instantly put an end to, and nearly the whole party hurried away towards the building, which was about a quarter of a mile distant. Gerald put himself at the head of the negroes, and urged them to advance with all speed. "Who is now upon the plantation?" cried he. "No one," returned the slaves, "no one but Mr. Marmledge." On emerging from the trees, and gaining a spot which commanded a full view of the building, they at

once perceived that it formed the seat of the conflagration, which, to all appearance, had already become so formidable and extensive as to be beyond human control.

Gerald, on first getting within a few yards of the building, looked in every direction, to ascertain whether there was any one near it; but he could not discover a single individual. A little way off, a range of cattle stood gazing at the flames, till, the wind happening to drive a shower of sparks towards them, they all gallopped off at once with loud bellowings, and took refuge in a cane-field. Though upwards of thirty people had now collected at the spot, nothing could be done to extinguish the fire; partly on account of its violence, and partly because, owing to the disorder that had lately prevailed upon the estate, the implements necessary for collecting water and throwing it upon the flames were scattered about, no one knew where. However, this excited little regret in the mind of Gerald, as he felt satisfied that the building could not be preserved by any means whatever; and he began to consider where Mr. Marnledge could possibly be at such a juncture, for it never once occurred to

him to suppose that he had been caught in the flames; particularly as his usual hour of retiring to sleep had scarcely yet arrived. He therefore tried to persuade himself, notwithstanding some painful misgivings, that his host had yielded to his usual recent apathy respecting the affairs of the estate, and had intentionally wandered away from the scene of the conflagration.

The upper part of the building contained little except lumber, but it was from it that the flames chiefly issued. However the greatest mischief was actually going on below, where there were both sugar and spirits in considerable quantities to feed the fire, but where, on account of the want of windows, and the deficient circulation of air, it was confined within the walls, and prevented from shewing itself. Gerald made several attempts to open a large door, intended to admit carts into the ground floor of the building, but the splinters fell so thickly from above, and the heat and smoke were so overpowering, that he found it dangerous to approach near enough to accomplish his purpose, and he was obliged to remain ignorant of the state of things in the interior of the house. After the conflagration had con-

tinued half an hour, the upper floor fell in, having been burnt through from below. Part of the adjoining walls gave way at the same time, and falling outwards, a blackened corpse was flung to the ground along with them. It was shrunk into an attitude of deformity, and its hands were strongly applied to its head, as if to combat agonising pain; and on one of them glittered a large emerald ring, which silently told all present that the burnt remains were those of Mr. Marnledge. The negroes assembled round the body, and made many remarks to each other in their own language, and Gerald fancied that he once or twice distinguished the name of Letitia Everhard; but while listening to them, Unda suddenly made her appearance, and they retired backwards and preserved silence, while she surveyed the corpse of her late master.

An inquiry now arose how the fire had originated, but no information could be obtained on that point, every person, except its unfortunate victim, having been away from the plantation at the time of its breaking out. Gerald had reason to suppose, that Mr. Marnledge had lately been in the habit of indulging in an unusual

quantity of wine, and he concluded that he had that evening dropped asleep after an excess of the kind, and thus fallen a prey to the flames almost before he was aware of their existence. Having given directions respecting the disposal of the dead body, which he arranged should be interred next morning, Gerald returned home, and on reaching the house, sent for Mrs. Dittersdorf's female attendant, and directed her to inform her lady of the fatal events of the last few hours.

Early next morning, Gerald performed the funeral obsequies of Mr. Marnledge, if they could be so called. Four negroes carried the coffin, or shell, containing the body, and he alone, and unattended, walked behind. There was no particular spot allotted for a burying place at Sablegrove, and Gerald determined that the remains of Miss Everhard should not be insulted by the near deposition of those of her guardian, which were now about to be conveyed to a remote part of the estate. The road to it passed the building which had been burned the preceding evening. The fire was extinguished, but the tall wooden supports, and blackened rafters, still continued to emit smoke,

and now and then a faint and lambent flame would arise from among the mass of rubbish lying underneath them. During the night, the conflagration had extended itself along the fields, destroying the dry grass and stalks of India corn which covered them, and changing the rich yellow of the surface into a dull sooty blackness. In some places, young cattle, that had been surprised by the flames, lay scorched and dead upon the ground, whilst flocks of carrion crows already wheeled in circles around their carcases, and playfully attempted to pick out their eyes. Even some of the trees on the outskirts of the plantation had suffered from the fire, a few random sparks having kindled their dry and decaying trunks, and thus been the means of withering and discolouring the beautiful creepers which extended like screens between them. The paroquets, hoopoos, and monkeys, that had formerly gambolled among their branches, were no longer either to be seen or heard, having retired into the recesses of the woods. A dead, and, as it were, expectant silence prevailed; and a dank vegetable exhalation, mingled with the odour of half charred timber, rose from the ground,

which was covered with long and tangled grass, through which the party found some difficulty in forcing their way.

Gerald, having seen the body deposited in the earth, was returning home by a road different from that by which he had come, when several negroes approached, and directed his attention to a long range of half-burnt huts, a little way off. None of them had any portion of roof remaining, and in the greater number some fragments of wall alone shewed that they had once served for habitations. Many women and children sat disconsolately within the ruins, and a few were apparently engaged in searching for lost property among the rubbish. "See what last night's fire has done!" said one of the negroes to Gerald. "Half of our people have lost every thing, and are ruined. The flames reached our huts so suddenly, that we had no time to save any thing. We have no provisions now. Our gardens and poultry are destroyed. What is to be done?"

"This is, indeed, terrible news," returned Gerald; "but you and your families shall be supplied from the stores for the present."

"Stores, sir!" repeated the negro; "all these were in the lower part of the plantation-house, and were either burnt or entirely spoiled. The small crop of grain that is now upon the ground will not be ripe for some weeks to come."

"You cannot, and shall not starve," said Gerald. "Some of the cattle must be killed and distributed for immediate use. Is not the overseer yet well enough to make some arrangement of the kind? Let every one do the best he can in the mean time, and I will contrive some plan for your relief."

Gerald hastened away, glad to escape from the sight of misery which he had not the means of alleviating, but he was soon again interrupted by the hurried approach of one of the slaves, who said he had been sent to report to him, that the overseer was just dead, and to receive orders respecting his funeral. Gerald gave them as shortly and expeditiously as possible, and dismissed the messenger.

He continued on the same spot for several minutes, in a bewildered state of mind. "Mr. Marnledge dead!" exclaimed he to himself;

" the overseer dead! The stores destroyed! The slaves burnt out of their houses! Famine on the estate! Myself and Mrs. Dittersdorf its only European inhabitants! What things are these?—Go on, Destiny, I shall not seek to oppose you. Anon, there will be other and greater horrors; Sablegrove has been transferred to the destroying angel! A terrible curiosity impels me to await the closing scene of the drama. But no, this must not be, lest I involve myself in the disasters which are likely to attend it."

He now began to consider how he should conduct himself towards Mrs. Dittersdorf, while he remained at Sablegrove; and much as he disliked her, and though she had forfeited every claim to his good offices or protection, he resolved to afford her both the one and the other, only avoiding her company, except on necessary occasions. In pursuance of this, on reaching home, he sought an interview with her, and communicated the death of the overseer, the destitute condition of the negroes, and the ruinous affairs of the estate. " There is now no one to superintend any thing," continued he,

"for neither my health, my experience, nor my inclination, admit of my taking the management of this property, even supposing that the disasters which have recently befallen it are retrievable. What would you wish to be done? My stay at Sablegrove will be short."

Mrs. Dittersdorf started at his last words, and after a pause, answered, "I am now engaged in examining Mr. Marnledge's papers; at least, such of them as have not been destroyed, and in a day or two hence I shall be better able to speak of my plans for the future. I hope that the domestics are sufficiently attentive to your comfort, and that you will not hesitate to command every thing that this place can afford."

Gerald satisfied her on those points, and took leave, glad that she had not proposed that they should in future meet at meals. Unda had hitherto been the channel through which all his wants had been supplied, and he felt no disposition to make any change in his domestic arrangements, comfortless and unsocial as they were.

On the succeeding morning, a negro came to Gerald, and reported that five of his comrades and their families, irritated by the destruction of

their houses, and alarmed at the prospect of suffering from famine, had absconded from the estate, and that the others were becoming discontented and mutinous; that the cattle were straying into the woods, there being no one to take charge of them.

"I wish to hear nothing of these things," returned Gerald, "for I cannot remedy them; my present purpose is to find means of leaving Sablegrove. Will you act as my guide hence? Do you know the road to the nearest plantation?"

"Yes," replied the negro, "it is forty miles distant, and I am ready to take you there, but we cannot go without horses or mules, and there are none of these on this estate. I believe they may be hired from a free negro, who lives a few miles off, and if you will give me the money, I will send it to him, and desire him to deliver the cattle to the messenger who carries it."

Gerald told him that he should consider of his plan, and dismissed him. But his reflections led to no consoling or encouraging result. In short, he neither had money nor valuables of any kind, nor the means of procuring them, and

this poverty rendered all his schemes equally unfeasible. It appeared, that his first step towards quitting Sablegrove involved some expense, and it seemed probable, that much greater would be incurred in the progress of his journey. He scorned to apply to Mrs. Dittersdorf for assistance, nor could he reconcile himself to the humiliating alternative of asking or accepting unpaid services from the negroes, even were he certain that any of them could manage to convey him to the nearest plantation, on the strength of their own private resources. There was neither a horse nor a mule upon the estate, which he might have appropriated to himself for a time, and afterwards sent back; and the idea of walking forty miles through the woods, and of course sleeping two or three nights in their recesses, particularly in his feeble state of health, could not be entertained for a moment, as long as the remotest chance of his being able to effect the journey in any other way remained.

During the two succeeding days he had no intercourse with Mrs. Dittersdorf, beyond what common civility required, when he happened to meet her. But she looked ill and miserable, and

shewed in various ways that she was desirous of his society;—and it could not be otherwise, for she led a life of as complete solitude as he himself did, while her sex necessarily confined her more within doors, where every thing was calculated to remind her of persons and scenes which were fatal to her peace, and which she must have wished and struggled permanently to forget.

Gerald usually spent the cool of the evening in rambling round the estate, on which all labour had lately been suspended, in consequence of the death of its proprietor and his overseer, the destruction of the stores, the dispersion of the negroes, and the wandering away of the cattle. In addition to the slaves that formed the domestic establishment of Sablegrove, a few old people alone remained upon the plantation, and were almost the only living objects that Gerald encountered in the course of his walks. A melancholy silence prevailed everywhere, except when the woodpecker made some old tree ring with the quickly repeated strokes of his bill, or when the dry, coriaceous, dust-coloured stems of the euphorbium clanked against each other, as they swung about agitated by the breeze. The

woods surrounding the estate were so thick, that the eye could penetrate but a little way into their recesses, and Gerald often fancied that they shed a darker frown, when he looked towards them in the anxious hopes of soon being able to pass their boundaries.

One evening, the stormy appearance of the sky induced him to return from his ramble at an earlier hour than usual. The atmosphere was still and sultry, and the heavens were overspread with several layers of dark dense clouds, which emitted frequent flashes of lightning. He threw open the windows of his chamber for the sake of coolness, and myriads of insects of various kinds soon entered, covering its walls and roof, and pertinaciously adhering to the spot upon which they first happened to alight. These he well knew formed indications of a storm, and closing all the venetians again, he sat down in solitude awaiting its approach.

Rain, wind, thunder, and lightning, soon ensued, and for nearly two hours appeared to be struggling for mastery. The darkness was intense, and amidst the long tumult of the elements, no human or animal sound reached Ge-

rald's ear. He opened his chamber door several times and looked out into the adjoining veranda, and called to the slaves to bring lights; but no one answered him, and the house seemed to be totally deserted. It was in vain that he raised his voice to the utmost pitch. The rain, blown inwards, dashed upon his face, the damp wind chilled him, and he at length shut his door; and, in the absence of any other resource, threw himself upon his bed.

In this situation he was soon disturbed by a loud knocking at his door. He opened it, and perceived Mrs. Dittersdorf. She trembled so much that she could scarcely stand, and her countenance expressed a mixture of hesitation and terror, and was deadly pale. Her long hair hung down around her shoulders, and she carried a lamp in one hand, and endeavoured to shelter its flame from the wind with the other.

"Mr. Berens!" cried she, "this interruption must appear like madness on my part; but I care not what you think: I cannot, I will not remain alone any longer. The solitude of this place is dreadful: it makes my soul sink within me. How can you bear to sit here in darkness? I

have this night spent two hours of misery and terror in my chamber; but unable to endure its frightful loneliness, I now seek your presence and your society. Spurn me not! Drive me not hence! Leave me not a prey to the fearful images that are constantly crowding around me. What a night is this! Can you listen unmoved to the thunder?—but you are not conscience-stricken like myself. Accompany me hence, if you have any pity. Let us sit together. Do not quit me, at least till the tempest is over."

The wildness of her looks, the vehemence of her language, and the character of her fears, collectively affected the mind of Gerald, and he experienced a shuddering perturbation, which impelled him to remain in her company, and made him feel astonished that he had hitherto been insensible to the deep gloom and solitude of his apartment. She saw by his countenance, that he was inclined to accede to her request, and raising the lamp to shew the way, she conducted him to the chamber in which they had formerly had an evening interview. Here there were several candles burning; and these, combined with the surrounding furniture, gave the place an air of

cheerfulness and comfort, to which Gerald had long been unaccustomed.

"How kind you are to come here!" said Mrs. Dittersdorf. "Your presence relieves me from a thousand imaginary, but not the less intolerable terrors. When by myself, the moaning of the wind, or the fluttering of an insect, throws me into a state of trepidation. I sometimes fancy that I hear rapid footsteps pacing the adjoining room. Consider what a situation ours is! I say ours, because we are now together. Are you aware that all the slaves, except a little girl and old Unda, left the house this morning? The reasons of their doing so will make you laugh," continued she, attempting to smile, but shuddering and breathing irregularly. "In short, it is said that a spectre has been seen on this estate, and only last night. It had the dress and appearance of an European. It walked past my window! This must have been mere fancy, you know; but still they said that it walked past my window! What could they mean by that?"

"Do not listen to such reports," said Gerald, observing Mrs. Dittersdorf's agitation, and becoming partially infected by it himself. "Let

us talk of something else. Your mind has become diseased. This gloomy night has depressed your spirits."

"Aye, aye," returned she, "you say well; my mind *is* diseased:—and you partly know why. This night's storm will indeed pass away, and tranquil skies will succeed; but the tempests that now agitate me, are of an infinitely more enduring kind, and threaten to rage continually. But I must have done with this! You look pale and nervous, and require refreshment. Some wine will do you good. Girl, bring more lights, and place that fruit and those decanters upon the table. I fear, Mr. Berens, that my two attendants are bad caterers, and I must therefore now go and look to the thing myself."

She now left the apartment, and her absence afforded a kind of relief to Gerald, who felt a repugnance at conversing with her, and even disliked to look on her countenance, so terror-stricken and unearthly was its expression. The storm without still raged with unabating violence, and, during the momentary lulling of the wind that occasionally took place, he could distinctly hear the noise of the advancing tide; and at these

times a chill would come over his soul, like what the waves might have produced on his body, had they been washing over it. The night of horror passed on the salt-marsh, the gloomy interior of the ruined building there, the increasing waters, the chambers above, the dying negro-woman, and the last gasp and sigh of the perishing Letitia, crowded upon his mind with agonising distinctness; and when Mrs. Dittersdorf re-entered the room, she found him leaning against the wall, with clenched hands and a damp and quivering forehead.

"This must not be, Mr. Berens," said she, with unnatural and assumed gaiety; "let us banish sorrow for one night at least. We are now the only inmates of Sablegrove, and we ought to keep up each other's spirits. You have taken no wine yet:—must a lady then teach you to drink! Let us be seated at table."

The room was now brilliantly lighted up, and a variety of fruits, liquors, and dishes covered the table, at one end of which Mrs. Dittersdorf placed herself, while Gerald unwillingly occupied

the other, and forced himself to partake of the things set before him.

"How extraordinary is our situation here!" exclaimed Mrs. Dittersdorf. "Never before, I believe, were two people more completely thrown upon each other. There is not a soul with whom we can associate within forty miles of this. Sablegrove is now like a desert island. We must mutually endeavour to make its solitude as agreeable as possible. But you are to blame in this respect, Mr. Berens; and under different circumstances, I might have felt offended at your want of gallantry. I have sought your society, when the reverse ought to be the case."

"My ears surely deceive me," cried Gerald, recoiling with disgust. "What can you mean by language of this kind? Methinks your levity is ill-timed. You have well remarked upon the singularity of our situation; for it is indeed a matter of wonder that two persons so opposite in their natures as we are should voluntarily seat themselves at one table, or be found in each other's company. I must sincerely tell you that I have been drawn hither by complaisance, not

by inclination. When I look around me, I feel astonished how I can quietly sit here; bearing in mind, as I do, the events of the few past weeks. But this banquet owes its piquancy to the funerals, and conflagration, and misery that have preceded it. The tempest now raging outside forms a characteristic accompaniment to our nocturnal revels. These dazzling lights are well calculated to dispel the atmosphere of death that has of late involved and overhung Sablegrove;—this convivial table is an exquisite satire upon that famine which has driven most of the inhabitants from this devoted spot;—and to give the scene an additional zest, we have only to drink to the memory of the dead, naming them individually, and describing in what manner they respectively perished."

"Yours is the language of a weak mind," replied Mrs. Dittersdorf; "you acknowledge yourself to be the slave of circumstances by thus dwelling upon past events. My principle is to banish them from the memory. I am not insensible to the detestation of myself and my actions which is implied in your remarks upon our present situation, but it gives me little con-

cern whether you love or hate me. I find your society desirable at this time, and therefore wish to make myself agreeable to you, and to suggest pleasing ideas. The grotesque horrors of our condition here make it absolutely congenial to my mind, which has at different times been the victim of such violent and harrowing excitement, that common things and common events now give it neither pleasure nor pain. There are times, indeed, and this evening was one of them, when I cannot help giving way to all sorts of visionary and superstitious terrors, though my reason condemns the weakness of being affected by such chimeras."

"I was indeed astonished at the fears which you expressed a short time ago," replied Gerald. "I supposed that a character so determined as yours would be proof against any disorders of the imagination, though Sablegrove seems to me to be of all places in the world the one best adapted to give birth to them. Do you intend to remain here?"

"What mean you by such a question?" inquired Mrs. Dittersdorf. "Where should I—where can I go? Is not this my property?"

"I have no reason to doubt its being so," answered Gerald; "but how will you be able to live here alone? The negroes are dispersed, and cannot be collected again without much difficulty. Their labours on the estate for this season are at an end. Can you exist contentedly in a scene of such desolation? I cannot promise to be of any service to you, for I depart hence very soon."

"Depart hence!" repeated Mrs. Dittersdorf. "You must renounce that idea. Sablegrove is now your only home. You have neither friends nor money. Would you throw yourself upon the world without the means of support or advancement? I know that you were uncomfortable here while Mr. Marnledge lived, but your condition shall now be much improved, both as respects enjoyments and pecuniary advantages. You shall take charge of the estate, and shall be liberally recompensed and provided for."

"You seem to forget the purpose for which I have come to the West Indies," returned Gerald. "It was to secure possession of property of my own, instead of taking charge of that of other people. Your proposals would doubtless be agreeable to

a poor man or an adventurer, but they offer no attraction to me, though at present I fall under the first appellation, as bitter experience has too well taught me. It is the want of money alone that has hitherto prevented my quitting Sablegrove, but I have now made up my mind to leave it at all hazards, and in face of any difficulty that may present itself."

"Then," cried Mrs. Dittersdorf, "if the voice of self-interest has no persuasive influence, listen to that of humanity. Would it be generous—would it be kind to abandon me in the midst of my embarrassments? I am a helpless female, having no one to assist or protect me. You now look with horror and disgust upon Sablegrove, but how infinitely more dreadful must its solitude appear to me after you have gone from hence! You have this evening told me that the negroes are dispersed, that the crops are destroyed, and that the estate is nearly ruined; yet you would desert your post under such circumstances, and leave me to struggle with difficulties which the greatest energy and perseverance will perhaps be unable to overcome. Left here alone, I should become distracted. The

mere thought of it puts desperation in my brain. I know, Mr. Berens, that I must appear a wretch in your eyes. Think me so—call me so. Taunt me with my sins and errors;—accuse me of being the destroyer of Letitia Everhard;—but do not—do not leave me to the unexampled horrors of a life of solitude and seclusion in this place. Remain at least till I have procured a companion. You shall command every thing. Do I supplicate in vain?" continued she, dropping upon her knees, and shedding tears.

"Rise—rise, madam," cried Gerald; "that attitude will not increase the effect of your entreaties. Are you sure that in asking me to remain at Sablegrove you consult your own peace and happiness? Remember that no communion or sympathy can exist between us. Remember also the contagion that perhaps now revels in my veins; and beware lest your past perfidy be punished by your falling a victim to that misery which you were so inhuman as to wish to entail upon others."

"All this comes well from you," replied Mrs. Dittersdorf, "and I am bound to listen to it. But as you have consented to bear me company

a little longer, let me entreat you to add to the obligation by forgetting the past. See, the tempest has already abated, and a night of tranquillity is about to succeed. Let us follow the example of the elements. Shall I play the organ, and sing to you? Here is a beautiful air, called 'Together let us range the fields', which I dare say will delight you. But no, you don't seem inclined for music to-night. Then bring me that pack of cards, and I will tell your fortune."

"Pardon me," said Gerald; "we have had amusement enough to-night. My ear has of late been jarred by sounds of misery, and it has not yet recovered its tone; and the recollection of the past makes me fear to learn any thing concerning the future. Allow me to bid you good night, and to wish you sound repose."

"So be it, if you will," returned Mrs. Dittersdorf. "To-morrow we shall walk over the estate, and endeavour to form some plan of restoring it to order and beauty. The graves of our unfortunate friends shall be planted with flowers, and the huts of the negroes converted into *cottages ornées*. In our arrangements we

shall study ornament rather than profit. The building upon the salt-marsh may be remodelled in the character of a temple to friendship, and from the foundations of the burnt plantation-house shall rise an aviary and a conservatory for plants. But I perceive that you think my imagination outruns my judgement. However, we shall understand each other better by and by. Good night"

CHAPTER V.

Two nights subsequent to that just described, Gerald was standing at a window, listlessly viewing the scene before him. It was about eleven o'clock, and a full moon and clear sky, rendered even distant objects very distinct, though the black surface of the marsh, as usual, exhaled a dense vapour, which lay upon its expanse to the height of two or three feet. Towards the edge of this, Gerald thought he perceived something moving, and his attention and interest were immediately excited, for it was seldom that any thing, either human or animal, visited the spot, except by compulsion. A few moments' observation, enabled him to discover the figure of a man, in a white dress. At first, Gerald had only a side view of this apparition; but it at length turned its face towards him, and though he could not distinguish the features, he saw from their complexion, that they were not those of a negro.

The figure gradually emerged towards the bank of the marsh, and then slowly walked along the side of it, all the while looking in the direction of the house, and apparently surveying it, and the surrounding objects, with no ordinary attention.

Mrs. Dittersdorf's story of the slaves having been frightened away by a spectre, immediately occurred to Gerald, and he had little hesitation in believing that they had seen the same figure that was now before him, though he did not feel disposed to come to the same conclusion respecting its nature that they had done. However, he regarded the individual with strong curiosity and interest; for to have seen even a negro at such a time, and in such a place, would have excited speculations concerning his purposes; but the appearance of a white man, under similar circumstances, seemed totally unaccountable, there being no resident of that description within forty miles of Sablegrove. Besides, the stranger did not conduct himself like one who was travelling, or had lost his way, or was in search of a place of shelter for the night. His slow pace, and scrutinizing looks, and apparent anxiety to avoid ob-

servation, proved that he had some particular and private purpose in view, relative either to Sablegrove or its inhabitants.

Gerald hesitated whether he should call to the stranger, who was not more than two hundred yards off, or even go out to meet him; but the fear of alarming Mrs. Dittersdorf, decided him against doing the first, and, while considering the propriety of the second suggestion, the object of his curiosity disappeared among some shrubbery, and did not again shew himself, though Gerald continued on the watch nearly an hour longer. When he went to bed, the events of the evening did not prevent him from falling asleep, but about the middle of the night, he started up, awakened by a piercing, but suppressed shriek, which seemed to proceed from the opposite side of the house. He listened with acute and agonized attention, but all remained so quiet, that he began to suspect that he had been converting the impression received during a dream into a reality. While considering the matter, he distinctly heard a noise like the opening or closing of a venetian window, and then the faint grating of

a bolt. In a few moments more, the hollow tread of retiring footsteps dropped upon his ear, and he got up and looked out, but could not discover any one. He became nervous and uneasy, and felt disinclined to return to bed, though he had no light in the room except what was afforded by the moon, now within a little way of the horizon. A few blood-red rays streamed through the half-closed venetians, and fell upon the picture of the deceased Mr. Dittersdorf, and as Gerald gazed upon the visage, he almost fancied that it turned its eyes reproachfully towards him, and seemed to warn him away from Sablegrove. At this time a slight rustling took place behind the canvass, and a roll of paper dropt upon the floor. Gerald hurriedly picked it up, and a single glance enabled him to discover that it was the account of the trial of Mrs. Dittersdorf, which he had formerly read. A rat, or a lizard, probably, had displaced it from its original situation; but the circumstance appeared ominous to Gerald, and slumber did not again visit his eyes that morning.

Mrs. Dittersdorf, when he met her in the course of the day, looked miserable beyond de-

scription. Her perturbation was visible and constant, and she moved from one place to another, without any defined object, and often seemed to be on the point of making some communication to Gerald, but apparently was unable to muster resolution to do so. He avoided her society, for her agitation was both painful and contagious to the beholder. The day was passed in idleness and solitude, and his mind in vain sought for some agreeable image or idea on which it could pleasurably repose itself. The weather was oppressively hot, and the usual sea breeze seemed to have been arrested in its course, for nothing stirred the calm thick air, or moved the sleepy-looking foliage of the trees. At noon, the sky, particularly in the neighbourhood of the horizon, assumed a brassy hue, and sharp-pointed, fire-coloured clouds shot across it in various directions, and, on coming into contact, seemed to pierce each other through, instead of amalgamating together. Sometimes a gigantic column of black cloud would rise slowly above the horizon, and after continuing for a while in a perpendicular and frowning position, would all at once lose its erectness, and incline downwards,

and then roll as it were sullenly and unwillingly away, as if unable to effect the purpose for which it had reared itself upon the front of the sky.

In the evening, the appearance of the stranger near the salt-marsh on the preceding night, recurred vividly to Gerald's mind, and he resolved to watch whether he made a second visit to the same place. But, as in the event of his coming again, Gerald wished to have some communication with him, or at least to be able to observe him very closely, he thought he should be more likely to succeed in these objects, by concealing himself in the neighbourhood of the marsh, than by taking his former position at one of the windows of the house. After Mrs. Dittersdorf had retired to her chamber, he stole out, and placing himself among some shrubbery, where he could see every thing without being seen, anxiously awaited the arrival of the unknown visitant.

Gerald had a full view of the windows of Mrs. Dittersdorf's chamber, and he observed, that even at that late hour it had a light in it, which streamed through the chinks of the closed venetians, but was at intervals overshadowed by

the passing and repassing of some object, which he supposed to be the lady herself, pacing backwards and forwards. He had remained on the watch nearly half an hour, when he heard approaching footsteps, and the same figure that he had formerly seen, appeared within a few yards of him, and after looking cautiously around for some moments, advanced towards the house, and stopped close besides Mrs. Dittersdorf's windows, which were about three feet from the ground. The stranger put his head within a few inches of the venetians, and seemed to listen attentively. He then knocked gently several times, and the window was slowly and hesitatingly opened by some person inside, and Gerald discovered Mrs. Dittersdorf standing in its recess. The stranger said a few words in a low tone, but she apparently motioned him to be silent, and putting her foot upon the window sill, and leaning upon his shoulder, she descended to the ground.

The two now walked away in the same direction, but kept at a little distance from each other, and on reaching a spot where they were not likely to be observed or overheard by any person

in the house, they entered into conversation. Gerald could not distinguish a word of what was said, but Mrs. Dittersdorf seemed a suppliant, and the stranger's tones and gestures indicated a sense of power, and a careless indifference to her agitation and entreaties. The interview lasted about a quarter of an hour, and at an early part of it, Gerald felt convinced that the stranger was a person of low, or at least of inferior rank, and that Mrs. Dittersdorf's distress, while in his company, arose in some degree from a sense of humiliation in being obliged to associate with him. On their separating, she re-entered her apartment by the window, while he pursued his way along the side of the marsh and soon was concealed from view by the trees.

Next morning, Gerald, on entering the public room, found Mrs. Dittersdorf engaged in conversation with a person of his own sex, whom he almost instantly recognized to be the stranger whose nocturnal visits had attracted his observation. She was a good deal confused and agitated when she perceived Gerald, but she introduced her guest to him by the name of Mr. Palno, and said, with embarrassment, that he had come

from a great distance to see her on business. His features and complexion told that he was a mulatto, though the latter made a near approach to European whiteness. He wore a large straw hat, having the under part of the brim lined with green silk, and a broad black ribbon as a band. His eyes were large and gray, and his countenance lank, pale, and bony, and expressive of some degree of ferocity. His thick out-turned lips had no more red in them than his face, and were frequently curved downwards into a kind of melancholy smile. A tall, slender, large jointed figure, awkward and lounging in its gait, completed his portrait, and Gerald thought that he never before had seen so unprepossessing a person. His dress was a white cotton jacket and pantaloons, and he carried a small cane in his right hand, which he was in the habit of waving backwards and forwards while he spoke. His manner to Mrs. Dittersdorf was marked by a cool insolence, which her unresenting submissiveness was calculated to encourage rather than repress; and when addressing Gerald, he assumed a style of easy familiarity which seemed intended to inform the latter

that he considered himself in every respect his equal.

Gerald left the room after a few minutes, for he felt it humiliating to remain in the company of a person who evidently belonged to the lower orders of West India society, and who seemed inclined to withhold from others that respect and deference to which their station entitled them. Mrs. Dittersdorf soon followed him, saying, "I see that you are offended, and perhaps justly too, at being brought into contact with Mr. Palno. I acknowledge that he is not fit company for either of us, but circumstances compel me to receive him as an equal. His stay will not be long, and let me entreat you, if you feel any regard for my peace, my happiness, or indeed my personal safety, to conceal your disgust, and to treat him with common civility. I am a wretched woman. On whatever side I turn, I see a dark and frightful abyss opening to receive me."

"I have no desire to offend Mr. Palno," returned Gerald; "but I cannot discover that there is any necessity that I should endeavour to conciliate him. He is your guest, and I feel no in-

clination to make any remarks upon the manner in which you may be disposed to treat him. But you must excuse me if I decline his society. As he comes upon business, and doubtless is well acquainted with your private affairs, my presence, while you are discussing these, would only prove a restraint to both parties."

"Alas! how little do you know," cried Mrs. Dittersdorf. "It is this very knowledge of my private affairs, that has endued him with a terrible power over me. Yes, Mr. Berens, he can make me his victim whenever he pleases. I must submit to the greatest concessions, to secure a continuance of his good will. How degrading this is! But there is no redemption from it. Our arrangements will soon be made, and I hope never to see him again. But in the mean time I must conciliate him, and I will do so, though you may condemn and despise me for conduct apparently so abject. We must all three dine together to-day. Do not irritate him by contemptuous behaviour. This is the last favour that I shall ever request of you. Think how much I must have at stake now, and befriend me once more."

"So be it then," returned Gerald, wearied by her importunities, and feeling some degree of curiosity to see and know more of an individual, who possessed such formidable and mysterious power over her. "But I hope you will adhere to your resolution, of making this your last request as respects myself, for to tell you the truth, I am heart-sick of the scenes of turmoil, deceit, and agitation, that seem to be congenial to Sablegrove, and I wish to take leave of them all as soon as possible. I may therefore congratulate myself upon Mr. Palno's arrival here, as he will be your protector and adviser, and thus render my further presence unnecessary."

Gerald remained in his room till dinner was announced. On entering the hall, he found Mr. Palno seated there, and swinging himself on the hind legs of his chair. He now wore a light green silk jacket, and a gaudy chequered handkerchief round his neck, fastened with a large brooch, and evidently had taken considerable pains with his toilette. He placed himself at table opposite to Mrs. Dittersdorf, and immediately began to eat and drink of what happened to stand before him, in a manner so rapid and

voracious, as did not admit of his indulging in conversation. The meal passed off in silence, except when he called for any thing; and in doing so, he never failed to address abusive language to the negroes in attendance, and to urge them to quickness and obedience, in a style of the lowest vulgarity and despotism. Mrs. Dittersdorf seemed overcome with shame, anger, and mortification, and did not even attempt to partake of any thing at table; and Gerald looked on with wonder and disgust, and had many surmises concerning the nature of the connection that existed between her and the repulsive mulatto.

After dinner, Mr. Palno rose from table of his own accord, and proposed to Gerald to walk over the estate. The latter, from regard to his promise to Mrs. Dittersdorf, did not make any objection, and they accordingly set out together. In the course of their ramble, the mulatto expressed his surprise at the desolate and neglected condition of the property, and seemed disposed to take Gerald to task for carelessness and mismanagement, and to consider him responsible for every thing.

"Here are bad prospects," said Mr. Palno. "It will require hard work to bring up arrears; but this may be done soon enough if money be forthcoming. Now, as I suppose you know all about Mr. Marnledge's affairs before he died, will you tell me how much he has left besides this estate?"

"I really cannot inform you," returned Gerald. "Mr. Marnledge never confided any thing of the kind to me."

"Well, well, that may be," answered the mulatto; "but having the management of his business here, you must have a shrewd guess how matters stand. I am told that the whole goes to Mrs. Dittersdorf; but I have not been able to prevail upon her to shew me his will. But it is chiefly about the ready money that I am interested. Is there much of it?"

"I must again plead ignorance," said Gerald; "but even did I know as much as you suppose I do, I should not feel myself authorized to make any disclosures upon the subject to a stranger like yourself. What purpose have you in making enquiries of this kind, for authority

you can have none, judging, at least, from your rank in life ?"

"Rank in life !" repeated Mr. Palno, angrily. "Your expression is a foolish one. Here, the man who can command most money, and has the best estate, and the greatest number of slaves, enjoys the highest rank. Pray what have you to boast of? Are not you a planter's clerk ? Mrs. Dittersdorf treats me with respect, and has good reasons for doing so ; that should convince you that she thinks me at least your equal."

"I do not mean to dispute the point," replied Gerald ; "but I must tell you that it is in compliance with her earnest request that I now associate with you."

"Ha, ha, ha, ha ! this is very good," exclaimed the mulatto, striking his cane repeatedly upon his leg, and throwing himself into a variety of whimsical attitudes. "She has been schooling you I find. Well, what other instructions respecting me did you receive ? Truly, if you have any regard for her, you had better obey them all. You see that Mrs. Dittersdorf

does not look down upon me, though you may do so, for she gives orders how I am to be treated. Let me tell you that I am no small personage in her eyes. Did she also direct you to swear to me that you know nothing of the state of Mr. Marnledge's affairs?"

"I have sworn nothing respecting that or any other subject," returned Gerald. "But I can excuse your expression, for in the society to which you have been accustomed, a man's simple assertion, probably, goes for nothing. Mrs. Dittersdorf did *not* request me to express ignorance of the state of Mr. Marnledge's affairs."

"Look ye, young gentleman," cried Mr. Palno, "I must have the truth out of one or the other of you. I understand that Mr. Marnledge died very rich, and I have an object in knowing if it was so, and also where the money lies. I can hardly believe that you are in league with Mrs. Dittersdorf, or about to make up a match with her, though a rich widow is a tempting article to a dependent fellow like yourself. But if it be so, let me tell you that I have some claims upon the lady, which had better be set-

tled before the marriage contract is signed; for she knows that I can at any time whisper something in your ear which would at once put an end to the business."

"I am not an admirer of Mrs. Dittersdorf," returned Gerald, with a melancholy smile. "I have every reason to be the reverse. Pursue your own plans, and all that I request is, that you will not endeavour to implicate me in any of them."

On returning to the house, they found Mrs. Dittersdorf in the veranda, apparently awaiting their arrival. She looked anxiously at them, as if to discover if any quarrel had taken place in the course of their walk, and then went to her own room. Mr. Palno, unconcernedly, drew several cigars from his pocket, and having smoked one or two, threw himself on a couch, and fell asleep with a third in his mouth. Mrs. Dittersdorf seemed to have expected that the mulatto would betake himself to repose, for she soon joined Gerald, who was strolling near the house, and asked for a recital of what had occurred during his ramble over the estate.

"Nothing of moment," replied Gerald.

"Your friend seemed rather dissatisfied with what he saw. He put many questions to me which I could not answer. They referred to the state of Mr. Marnledge's affairs. Mr. Palno believes that he died very rich."

"Alas, I would it were so," cried Mrs. Dittersdorf, "but he is under the greatest mistake there. The truth is, that Mr. Palno has claims upon me for a sum of money, and he has come here to obtain it, having heard that I had fallen into the possession of considerable wealth. I am totally unable to satisfy his demands, for Mr. Marnledge has literally left me no money, or indeed any thing except this estate. He may have had other property, but the vouchers of its existence have either been destroyed, or are deposited in some unknown place, and probably will never be found. The suddenness of his death sufficiently accounts for the disordered state in which his affairs were left. Mr. Palno refuses to believe all this, and insists upon my complying with his demands. In the event of my refusal he threatens to—but his power is dreadful. Oh that the flames had made *me* their victim! But this kind of life cannot be

endured long. This evening I shall make a last effort to get rid of him. Mr. Berens, if you do hate me, you now see me punished to your heart's content."

"I thank Heaven that feelings of revenge are foreign to my nature," returned Gerald. "No, could I relieve you from your present embarrassments, I would do it. But I cannot imagine how a person of Mr. Palno's description can possess such a controlling power over you. His visit seems a mysterious one. How came he here?"

"I can hardly tell you," said Mrs. Dittersdorf, faintly. "I believe he arrived secretly, and concealed himself in the neighbourhood several days before he first visited me, which was on that evening that we supped together in my room. He presented himself before my window at midnight. I instantly recognized him, and my terror was so great that I shrieked aloud. Seeing me dreadfully agitated, he said he would not enter upon his business at that time, but would come to have an interview with me on the same spot the succeeding evening, which was that of yesterday. He did come. He disclosed

his purposes. He insisted upon my receiving him as a guest to-day. I dared not refuse:—but I can tell no more."

She hurried away, and her sobs were audible to Gerald till she had reached her apartment and shut herself up in it. He spent the evening alone, and had no intention of returning to the public room that night, particularly as he at different times heard Mrs. Dittersdorf and Mr. Palno deeply engaged in conversation, which appeared to be of an agitating kind to the former. About nine o'clock, however, he received a summons from both parties, requesting his company for a few minutes. This he immediately obeyed, and found them standing beside a table, on which lay a number of papers and parchments.

"Mr. Berens," said Mrs. Dittersdorf, "circumstances, which it is unnecessary to detail to you, have made me come to the determination of conveying this estate to Mr. Palno. A perusal of Mr. Marnledge's will, which now lies before you, will shew that the property has been legally bequeathed to me, and that I have a right to dispose of it as I please. All that I request is, that

you will be a witness to the deed that transfers Sablegrove to Elias Palno, now present here."

"Madam," replied Gerald, "I have no right to inquire into your motives on this occasion, but I think it my duty to tell you that I cannot conscientiously do what you require, without some explanation from yourself. I have every reason to believe that you are now acting under the impulse of fear, and that your consent to the alienation of Sablegrove has been extorted by unlawful means. That you should freely and voluntarily, and without any apparent reason, make over this estate to a person in Mr. Palno's circumstances and rank of life, exceeds belief."

"Rank of life again!" interrupted the mulatto. "And pray what do you know of my circumstances? Perhaps I have paid for the estate. Can you say that I have not? Surely, if the lady is satisfied, that is enough."

"Do not be violent," said Mrs. Dittersdorf, "Mr. Berens means well towards me, and has no intention to offend you. It is impossible for me to enter into any explanation of this affair," continued she, addressing herself to Gerald. "I

declare myself willing that the transfer of the property should immediately take place. Please to oblige me with your signature without further preamble."

"To be sure.—Do so at once," cried the mulatto; "and let me tell you, that in consenting to take Sablegrove, I am doing a favour to Mrs. Dittersdorf. I expected to have had hard money instead of a piece of singed land; so put down your name, lest I should repent of my bargain and refuse to stand by it."

"I have heard enough," said Gerald, "to make me determine against being a party in this transaction. It must be arranged between yourselves without my interference."

"S'death!" exclaimed Mr. Palno, furiously. "Do you still continue obstinate? By Heavens! I believe there is a regularly contrived plan between you and Mrs. Dittersdorf to cheat me out of my rights. But I'll enforce them," continued he, striking the table with his fist, "I'll make the most of my secret. Down with the cash at once, or convey over the estate to me. Wait, wait; I know where to find a person

to witness the deed. I'll warrant his making no lawyer-like objections to signing the papers."

Mr. Palno now darted out of the room. Gerald and Mrs. Dittersdorf stood in silence on opposite sides of the table for some moments, and when she was about to speak, the mulatto entered, carrying the picture of her deceased husband. He held it up close to her face. Her eyes became fixed, her frame appeared to stiffen, and she stretched out her hand, and catching hold of Mr. Palno's arm, made an effort to speak; but her lips merely trembled, and she sank down at his feet. She remained a short time in a recumbent position, and then springing up with superhuman energy, rushed from the apartment.

"You don't seem to understand the meaning of all this," said the mulatto to Gerald. "That woman poisoned her husband. Here is his picture. She was brought to trial, but acquitted from want of evidence, and many believed her to be innocent. I alone know positively that she is not. I was Mr. Dittersdorf's servant at the time of his death, and by an extraordinary accident, happened to see her administer the poison

which destroyed him. She knew nothing of this till I told her of it, before the trial came on, and she offered me a considerable sum of money on condition that I should get out of the way. I accepted it, and immediately purchased a small sloop and some articles of traffic, and set sail from this island, intending never to return. At first I prospered well, but after a time I was shipwrecked, and lost every thing, and about a month ago I found my way back to the port of St. Thomas's. There I learned that my old mistress, whose life lay in my hands, had taken up with Mr. Marnledge, and was living here. They told me that he was very rich, and I thought that I could not do better than apply to her for assistance in my distress, and accordingly I set out for this place, but travelled cautiously and secretly, from the fear of meeting any one who knew me. When within a few miles of Sablegrove, a stray negro informed me of the death of Mr. Marnledge, and of your being a resident here. I rejoiced at the first piece of intelligence, for I thought that Mrs. Dittersdorf would thereby be enabled to be more liberal to me, as I had no doubt that

her protector had left her all his wealth. This does not appear to have been the case, or else he must have died comparatively poor; for my threats to proclaim Mrs. Dittersdorf's guilt, have failed to extort any money from her. She has now offered me this estate, worthless as it is, as the price of my silence, and I have agreed to accept of it, because I cannot get any thing better. I am resolved to enforce my demands, and it now remains with you, Mr. Berens, to save her from exposure and infamy, or to be the means of delivering her up to the punishment that is due to her crime. What do you say now? Remember that I am a poor man, and won't be put off by any but substantial reasons."

Gerald had listened with intense interest to the mulatto's hurried narrative, and after a short pause, he replied, "I am willing to give the required signature. I was not aware that this was a case of life and death, for if I had, I should not have been so scrupulous. However, it is not yet too late." He seized a pen, and put his name to the deed, which the mulatto immediately afterwards folded up and put in his pocket with a look of exultation. "Poor lady!"

said he, "I begin to feel for her situation; but I never will trouble her again, go where she may. I would now seek her and cheer her spirits, if I thought that my visit would give her any satisfaction."

"I think you had better remain where you are," returned Gerald. "Do you know what induced Mrs. Dittersdorf to put an end to her husband's life?"

"She had various reasons for wishing to get rid of him," answered Mr. Palno. "He used to treat her in the cruellest manner, and to make her the greatest slave in his house. He was so fond of money that he denied her the necessaries of life. She loved dress and gaiety, and, as you may suppose, they got on miserably enough together. There are other things that I could mention, but Mr. Marnledge is dead, and it is better not to tell any stories about him."

Gerald now called one of the negroes, and inquired for Mrs. Dittersdorf, but no one had seen her. He sent her female attendant to her room, which was found to be unoccupied, and a further search proved that she was not in any part of the house. Her disappearance seemed

alarming at such a late hour, and after the scene of terrible import in which she had recently been an actor; and Gerald proposed that they should immediately seek her in the neighbourhood. Accompanied by Mr. Palno and Unda, and two other negroes, all of whom carried lights, he led the way in prosecution of his design. A thick, but not heavy rain was falling, and the night was very dark, but Unda suggested that the first circumstance might be turned to a favourable account, as the moisture and softness of the ground would enable them to discover if there were any recent footsteps upon it, and also what direction they followed. After a little search, they perceived marks of the kind, and continued eagerly tracing them till they were led to the edge of the salt-marsh. Here the whole party halted, irresolute whether to proceed further in the same direction, for it seemed impossible that Mrs. Dittersdorf could have ventured to cross the marsh in such a dark night, and without a light, or even any one to guide her. However, recent footsteps were distinguishable upon its surface, and Gerald insisted upon pursuing their track as far as it extended, and he accord-

ingly preceded the party, and gained the opposite side of the marsh, without seeing any thing of the object of which he was in pursuit.

They were now in the neighbourhood of Unda's hut, which she had scarcely ever visited since Gerald's illness had required her presence at Sablegrove. On approaching the large tree already described as growing near it, they perceived a black muffled-up object crouching on the ground. The light of every lantern was at once directed towards it, and at the same moment a human countenance appeared, and a loud shriek told that it was that of Mrs. Dittersdorf. Gerald and the mulatto advanced towards her, but she flung herself back, exclaiming, "Shew your warrant! I was acquitted. No one can be put to trial twice for the same crime. Look above," continued she, pointing to the decayed body of the murderer swinging from the tree. "Is this to be the mode of my punishment? What! are you now about to place me beside him? Not alive, surely! Kill me first. Oh, do!"

After a little time, her phrensy abated, and she recognized Gerald and the mulatto, and seemed to understand them when they told her that she

had nothing to fear; but on the former proposing that she should immediately be carried back to Sablegrove, she expressed the strongest repugnance at the idea, and protested that she never again would recross the marsh. Gerald did not deem it advisable to press the matter at that time, and he desired Unda to receive Mrs. Dittersdorf into her hut, and accommodate her as well as possible, for she was so completely drenched with rain, and exhausted by walking, that any delay in procuring shelter for her, seemed likely to endanger her health. A fire soon blazed in Unda's humble abode, which, though rude in structure, and of narrow dimensions, was clean and dry. Gerald had in the mean time despatched one of the negroes to Sablegrove, with orders to bring back a supply of clothes, and such refreshments as could be procured, for the use of Mrs. Dittersdorf. On the messenger's returning with these articles, Gerald consigned her to the care of Unda and a slave girl, and, accompanied by Mr. Palno, retraced his way to the estate.

Early next morning, Gerald revisited Unda's hut. Her patient had spent a restless and agi-

tated night, and was in a burning fever. Gerald approached her bed and spoke to her, but on perceiving him, she waved him back with a look of terror, and hid her face in a handkerchief. He immediately retired, and never saw her again. She died on the third evening of her illness.

Gerald requested Mr. Palno to provide him with the means of leaving Sablegrove and eventually reaching the town of St. Thomas. This was done without delay, and after a five days' journey, Gerald found himself in the capital of the island. Several gentlemen there had been informed, by letters from England, that he was on his way to the West Indies, and had been expecting him for some time. They received him well, and put his affairs into a train of despatch, which enabled him to dispose of his property, and make all necessary legal arrangements connected with it, soon after his arrival amongst them. Having then no object in remaining longer in the island, he took an early opportunity of sailing for London, and reached it without further accident or adventure.

END OF SABLEGROVE.

ONE FALSE STEP.

ONE FALSE STEP.

CHAPTER I.

NEARLY a hundred convicts had just been landed at Sydney, from an English ship. They were drawn up in regular order in the court-yard of the factory, and the superintendant was inspecting them and examining a record of their names, previous history, and general behaviour during the outward voyage. All of them wore the same kind of dress; but in other respects their external appearance exhibited great diversity. The robust figures, clumsy limbs, and coarse rounded features of some, indicated that their possessors had belonged to the peasantry, and that the country parts of their native land had formed the scene

of their crimes or depredations; while in the weather-beaten faces and lounging gait of others, it was easy to perceive that they had been accustomed to a sea-faring life, and had violated the laws in the pursuit of smuggling or piracy; and the slender agile forms, keen eyes, and more refined countenances of a third set, proved that they had led a town life, and that the nature of their criminal practices had required the exercise of personal address and manual dexterity, rather than that of bodily strength and undaunted courage. Many of the groupe stood with folded arms, and bold, unabashed, looks, as if enjoying the consciousness of hardened and uncompromising iniquity. Some appeared to feel a stupid and listless indifference alike to their actual situation and future prospects; but others gazed inquiringly around, and seemed already to be considering what scope the place would afford for the exercise of their respective propensities, and the indulgence of their former habits. A few exhibited marks of deep sorrow and despondency; and among these was a young man, whose appearance and deportment bespoke a rank of life greatly superior to that of any of his fellow con-

victs. He soon attracted the attention of the superintendant, who inquired his name, and consulting the register, found that his crime was forgery. He bestowed on him a look of pity, which the object of it seemed to endure with impatience, and apparently was about to address something in reply; but after a moment's irresolution, he checked his half-executed purpose.

This young convict was named Deveral Hermsdill. He was twenty-six years of age, and his early life had been passed under circumstances favourable to the development and nurture of the best qualities of the human character. But on the death of his father, which occurred before he reached manhood, he came into possession of a considerable patrimony, and being entirely his own master, he quickly dissipated it by a course of extravagance and debauchery, in which he was, as usual, encouraged and assisted by the companions of his pleasures. He had resided with his father and mother in a retired part of the country, but shortly after the death of the latter, he had removed to London, to which Mrs. Hermsdill declined accompanying him, a town life not being congenial to her taste. She heard,

with sorrow, of the career of dissipation and extravagance into which he had entered, and wrote to him, expostulating upon the subject, but without effect. At length she received intimation, that in consequence of the large amount of his debts and the exhaustion of his property, he was likely soon to become the inmate of a prison. Upon this she hastened to London, and, unsolicited by himself, relieved him from all his embarrassments. Her generosity reduced her to a state of comparative indigence, but at the same time affected Deveral so deeply, that he firmly determined to renounce his follies and apply himself to some profession. About this time, the banker, in whose hands the remnant of Mrs. Hermsdill's property had been deposited, failed and absconded, leaving her utterly destitute. Deveral had now obtained employment, but no part of the remuneration which he expected for his services being yet due, he found himself unable to assist his mother, though her immediate wants were urgent and distressing. Rendered desperate, he was led to obtain a sum of money for her use, by forging a bill, which he expected to be able to take up before it became due:

but, not having received his salary so soon as he had calculated upon, the bill was presented and the forgery discovered. He was thrown into gaol, tried, convicted, and condemned to banishment to New South Wales, his crime not having been attended by circumstances sufficiently aggravating to warrant the infliction of a severer punishment.

After a short and distracting interview with his mother, he was hurried on board a transport bound for Port Jackson, and soon saw the shores of his native land receding from his view, with feelings that may easily be imagined. During the voyage, he suffered equally in mind and body. Though accustomed to the society of profligate characters, he was unprepared for the bold and disgusting depravity of his fellow convicts, and found no community of feeling in even the best and least corrupted amongst them. The degradation of being placed upon a level in point of personal accommodation and treatment with individuals belonging to the lowest rank of society, also annoyed and irritated him. The coarse rations, crowded sleeping place, and humiliating restrictions to which he was subjected, proved no

less distressing; and in disembarking from the convict ship, he felt as much pleasure as his acquittal and subsequent liberation from gaol would have produced in his mind a few months before.

There are three ways in which convicts are disposed of, on their arrival at Sydney. Those whose crimes have not been atrocious, and who have conducted themselves well during the voyage, sometimes receive what are called tickets of leave, which permit them to enjoy personal freedom, and to seek employment wherever they can find it. Convicts of the next grade are given as domestic or farm servants to those settlers who may apply for them, on condition that their employers shall feed and clothe them, and pay them a certain amount of wages annually. Those who have committed great crimes at home, and who have subsequently shewn a high degree of depravity, constitute the third class, and are sent by government to labour at public works, and in situations where constant and severe exertion is required.

It may be easily supposed that candidates for tickets of leave are in general very numerous, and

Deveral Hermsdill would probably have been successful in procuring one, had he made an effort to that effect; but being unacquainted with any trade or profession by which he might obtain a livelihood, he thought it would be imprudent to trust to his own exertions in this way, at least until he had acquired some knowledge of the country and its inhabitants. He therefore left the mode of his disposal to chance, and he soon learned that he was placed in the second class, and that he would be sent into the interior of the country as a servant to any farmer who might apply for one. The idea of such a destination was not unpleasing to Deveral, who ardently desired in the first place to be soon and permanently separated from his companions in crime and misfortune.

After remaining a few days more at the factory, he received intimation that he had been assigned to a farmer residing upon the banks of the Nepean River, about twenty miles beyond the town of Windsor, and that he should depart for his place of destination the following morning. At the appointed time, he set out from Sydney, in company with a number of other con-

victs, and under the care of a military escort. He avoided entering into conversation with his comrades, and kept as far from them as was practicable. Neither did he pay great attention to the nature of the country through which their route lay, or feel much interested about its inhabitants, whether native or European. When his eyes fell upon the degrading habiliments which he wore, and when he considered what the tenor of his future life was likely to be, he experienced for a time the recklessness of despair; but the beauty of the surrounding scenery, the contrast between the fresh and open expanse of country, and the closeness and confined limits of the factory from which he had been recently liberated, insensibly soothed his mind into a state of serene melancholy, and awakened languid hopes that he might still enjoy some degree of happiness, though at a remote period.

On arriving within three miles of Deveral's place of destination, one of the guard was detached from the main body, and directed to conduct him to the house of Mr. Bronde, whose domestic servant he was now to consider himself.

The last ten miles that the party had travelled had been through a wild and very thinly inhabited tract of country, and along a narrow and indistinct pathway, which Deveral and his guide, on separating from their companions, immediately forsook, and struck across an extensive plain partially covered with trees. They met no human being, and saw no marks of cultivation or industry, till they came within sight of Mr. Bronde's house. It stood upon a rising ground, and was only one story high, and was formed of logs of wood, weather-boarded on the outside, in a clumsy manner. Immediately around it, land to the amount of thirty or forty acres was cleared of trees and partly fenced; and beyond this, a vast expanse of level country stretched on every side as far as the eye could reach. The surface was diversified with little groves and clumps of trees, and covered with long grass, which waved and undulated, when the wind blew strongly, like the billows of an agitated sea. At the distance of a mile, the Nepean River was seen glittering through the interstices of the low woods that covered its banks, and a large flock of sheep had scattered itself widely in various directions, and

communicated a dull animation to the prospect. The sun was now within an hour of setting, and the air was cool and transparent, and the sky tranquil in appearance, and delicately blue. Every thing wore an aspect of perfect serenity, but the face of nature exhibited none of those glowing tints, vivid contrasts, and picturesque outlines, which are common in southern regions. The green of the leaves and grass was dull and almost greyish; the trees had a striking similarity of form, and were deficient in that magnitude which is essential to the grandeur of forest scenery; and the uninterrupted levelness of the country rendered the general contour of nature both tame and destitute, as it were, of any distinctive character.

Deveral, while his guide was announcing his arrival to Mr. Bronde, remained in front of the house, contemplating with an intense and painful interest, the spot which was in all probability to form the scene of his punishment and his labours, for a considerable time to come. However he felt pleased with the solitariness of its situation, and delighted that he was not likely to be thrown into contact with any convicts, or

even ever to see persons of the kind. He made up his mind to endure submissively the dislike, contempt, or suspicion of the colonists, should they be ungenerous enough to express any thing of the kind towards him; but the idea of being associated with criminals who would consider him on a level with themselves in rank of life and dissoluteness of principle, was so revolting to his mind, that an exposure to such a degradation would, he felt convinced, lead him to the commission of some desperate act.

He had not long been engaged in these reflections, when Mr. Bronde came out of the house, accompanied by the guard, and Deveral had an opportunity of seeing, for the first time, the master whom he was henceforth doomed to serve. Mr. Bronde was a tall, stout, large-boned, athletic man, about forty years old. His carriage was erect, and his gait constrained, and he had an austerity of visage which was more unprepossessing than the lineaments of bad passions would have been if exhibited upon a similar countenance. His eyes were dark and penetrating, and his features hard and unpliant, and his complexion was bronzed, apparently by hard-

ships and exposure to the weather. His coarse and sinewy hands bore evidence that their owner had lately been enured to severe labour, and his quick glances, irritable looks, and bodily activity seemed to indicate that he was a severe and uncompromising task-master. He advanced hurriedly towards Deveral, and in sharp and peevish accents questioned him respecting what he had been, and what kind of work he was capable of performing. On Deveral's stating, in reply, that he had never been accustomed to any description of manual labour, Mr. Bronde gave him a look of contempt and suspicion, and opening his register-roll, which the guard only now put into his hands, glanced over it, and then calling a little boy from the house, directed him to shew the convict where his place of abode was in future to be.

The boy led Deveral to a narrow, low, wooden building, in the rear of the dwelling-house, and about sixty yards from it. The place was divided transversely into several small apartments, one of which appeared to be used as a kitchen, and the others as store-rooms, and bed-chambers for servants. Deveral was conducted into the

one at the most distant extremity of the building, and informed that it was to be appropriated to his own use. Its dimensions did not exceed ten feet square, and the floor consisted of hardened mud, the inside walls being lathed, and plastered with the same material. A rude kind of bedstead, a small table, and a low stool composed its furniture, and it had only one window, which overlooked the scene already described. But Deveral disregarded the meanness of his accommodations, when he reflected on the comfort and advantage he should derive from having a place of retirement and seclusion at command during his hours of relaxation.

Here he remained alone and undisturbed for half an hour. An European female then entered the room, carrying several plates and similar articles, which she placed upon the table. While she was thus engaged, Deveral observed her attentively, and she was by no means backward in returning his regards. Her countenance was plain, and expressed a mixture of low cunning and shameless audacity, and displayed marks of former profligacy and dissipation. She viewed him with a leer of curiosity, and seemed

inclined to claim acquaintance with him. It immediately occurred to Deveral that she either was or had been a convict, and he easily perceived that reformation had not followed her removal from her native country, whatever restraints her situation might impose upon the indulgence of her particular propensities. The insolent confidence with which she surveyed him excited his anger and wounded his feelings, for he saw plainly enough that it arose from her knowledge of what he was, and her conviction that vice reduces all persons to an equality. She lingered in the room much longer than was necessary, and seemed to expect that Deveral would address or notice her in some way or other, but perceiving that he continued silent and evidently averse to her company, she at length threw a glance of spiteful resentment upon him, and throwing up her head, hurried out of the apartment.

She soon returned with some coarse and common food for his evening meal, and placing it before him, desired him to partake of it, adding that he would get nothing more of the kind till next morning. Deveral, though little

inclined to eat, followed her advice, and when he had done, she brought in some bedding, and having carelessly arranged it, removed the things from the table, and went away. In a few minutes after, Mr. Bronde came into the room, and looked round it to ascertain if the necessary things had been provided for Deveral's accommodation. When satisfied on this point, he retired, and closed the door behind him, locking it on the outside.

Mr. Bronde and his family had been settled in New South Wales nearly two years. In England he had also been a farmer of the middle rank, but a series of misfortunes had obliged him to abandon that mode of life in his native country. Possessed of only a small capital, saved from the wreck of his property, and desirous of seclusion from a world which he thought had used him badly, he emigrated to the spot already described, carrying along with him a sister nearly his own age, and a niece, who had been left under his protection in her childhood. He was a man of honourable principles, strict sense of justice, and highly moral conduct; but notwithstanding all this, every one dis-

liked him, on account of the austerity of his manners, and the coldness of his heart and disposition. Being entirely destitute of feeling or imagination, he could not understand the influence which they exerted upon other people, and had no sympathy for any thing that lay out of the daily sphere of his own ideas. No one could accuse him of ever having committed a mean, an unjust, or a vicious action, but they were equally unable to say that he had ever done a kind, an affectionate, or a generous one. His conversation was dull and constrained, and his manners repulsive; and his pleasures seemed chiefly to consist in his own attentive observance of a certain system of regularity in all things, whether great or small, and in the enforcement of this upon every one around him, or under his control. When he attempted to confer what he considered a favour upon any individual, it seemed as if he were inflicting a punishment, and he expressed his approbation in much the same style that people of kindly feelings do their resentment.

His sister, Miss Bronde, was a person of very different character. She had all the best feel-

ings that belong to woman; but these were restrained in their exercise, and kept in abeyance by the peculiarities of her brother's temper. She lived in constant fear of him, but had no resolution to oppose him steadily in any thing, and the regrets and annoyance which he daily caused her to suffer, were usually confided to her niece, who was a mere cipher in the estimation of Mr. Bronde, and therefore little calculated to increase her aunt's influence with the former. Miss Bronde had a small independent income which would have sufficed for her support in England, but affection for her niece had induced her to submit to a removal to New South Wales, though the country was far from being congenial to her taste.

Harriet Hasmere, the niece, and the youngest member of the family, now remains to be described. She was in the bloom of youth, and possessed much simplicity of mind, conjoined with strong feelings and a warm imagination. A restlessness of disposition, and a love of mental excitement, had formed the most striking features of her character from her earliest years, and had often conspicuously displayed them-

selves, notwithstanding the endeavours of her aunt to repress or extinguish them altogether, as being, in her opinion, qualities that were dangerous to female happiness. Harriet did not find herself agreeably situated in New South Wales, though at first, the idea of residing under a southern climate, and in a country covered with forests and nearly unexplored, and the prospect of seeing and mingling with its native inhabitants, had pleased her imagination, and reconciled her to her new mode of life. But these impressions she soon found to be fallacious, or at least of temporary duration, and she had for many months past viewed her condition with disgust, and been the victim of discontent and ennui. Her interest in the things around her was daily diminishing, and her aunt tried, in vain, to give her a taste for domestic occupations, or to excite her to engage steadily in any kind of pursuit, whether useful or merely amusing. Harriet, when urged to do so, would say in reply, that situated as she was, no acquirements which she might cultivate were likely to prove valuable either to herself or to others, and that therefore she felt no incitement to

make any exertion in that way. Removed from society, hopeless of ever again enjoying its pleasures, and rendered irritable by the moroseness and taciturnity of her uncle, and the unvarying monotony which marked the tenor of her life, she got into the habit of seeking refuge and consolation in the indulgence of her fancy. It became her chief occupation to imagine herself in circumstances of peril, difficulty, or adventure, all of which were directly, or indirectly, to be the means of improving her lot and removing her to a more congenial abode, than that which her uncle's house afforded. She was much addicted to rambling alone in the evenings, and visiting the most retired and beautiful parts of the neighbouring country, and this she was permitted to do without restraint, there being no reason to apprehend danger of any kind from any quarter.

The female already described as having attended upon Deveral was named Rachel, and formed the chief domestic of the family. She had been brought to the colony as a convict several years before, and had, in consequence of

good behaviour, been employed as a servant by several of the settlers, and eventually by Mr. Bronde. Notwithstanding this, she remained a depraved character at bottom, but finding it her interest to appear the reverse, she had art enough to disguise some of her vices, and place a prudent restraint upon the exercise of others; thus rendering herself apparently unexceptionable in conduct, and deserving of confidence. She acted as a kind of housekeeper to Mr. Bronde, performing those domestic offices which his sister found too fatiguing, or which were unsuitable to her station. Rachel was remarkable for cunning and low duplicity, and she possessed a discernment of character which enabled her to exert these to the best advantage. Every individual who had the means of benefiting her in the most remote degree, was liable to be subjected to her machinations, which, in general, were conducted with such skill, as to enable her to secure his good offices, or to minister to her avarice and selfishness in one way or another. She found herself a person of considerable consequence in the family, having the management of the table, the

provisioning of the inferior servants, and a control more or less direct over the comforts of every one around her.

At the period of Deveral's arrival at Mr. Bronde's house, its inmates, in addition to those above described, were a little girl, born in the colony, and employed as Miss Hasmere's personal attendant, two free European labourers, and a negro to cut firewood and perform other menial offices.

It has been mentioned, that Mr. Bronde, on leaving Deveral's chamber locked the door behind him, and carried away the key in his pocket. This little circumstance affected the feelings of the latter more powerfully and acutely than any thing that had occurred since his disembarkation. It shewed vividly to what a humiliating condition he was reduced, and what a degrading degree of suspicion was attached to the character of a convict wherever he went. "What does Mr. Bronde fear?" exclaimed Deveral, to himself: "Does he dread lest I should enter his house in the middle of the night for the purpose of robbery or murder?—or, that actuated by rage and revenge, I may do the part of an incendiary?

No, he surely cannot entertain such ideas; and, if he does, my conduct shall soon teach him to dismiss them. What are the pains of hard labour, privations, and tyranny, to the torture of being deemed capable of committing any and every crime! The family are, perhaps, now in the silence of night, considering what the nature and extent of my guilt has been, and coolly and deliberately exercising their imaginations in giving me credit for the execution of enormities at the name of which I shudder. But who is there here to undeceive them, or to explain the exact amount of my guilt?"

Agitated by reflections of this kind, he paced about the room in the dark for nearly two hours, and then exhausted, alike in mind and body, lay down to sleep.

At an early hour next morning, he was liberated from confinement, and conducted to a part of the farm about a quarter of a mile from the dwelling-house, and set to work to clear the land of timber which had already been felled. His labour consisted in chopping the trunks of trees into logs of a certain length, and getting these dragged by oxen to the spot where they

were to be deposited for future use, or in forming them into piles for burning, An hour's respite was allowed him for breakfasting, and another of the same duration in the middle of the day, and he was permitted to return home shortly before sunset. Unaccustomed to bodily exertion of any kind he felt excessively fatigued, and seated himself in front of his sleeping place to inhale the evening breeze. Observing Rachel a little way off, he asked her to procure for him some water.

"I would give you milk," replied she, "did you think me worth any civility."

"I do not understand you," said Deveral. "In what respect have I offended? I am a stranger here, and ignorant of the customs of the country."

"Why, all that I expect," answered Rachel, "is, that there should be a little sociality between us. We both have come from the same place, and I dare say kept the same kind of company there, and so there's no reason that we should not grow into acquaintance here."

"We are both, at least, equally unfortunate," observed Deveral, "and are now upon an

equality, though I suspect that it has not always been so. Believe me, I formerly was a gentleman."

"And I was a lady," exclaimed Rachel, with a derisive and incredulous laugh. Deveral paused, and felt his breast swell with resentment, but a moment's reflection made him endeavour to suppress it, and rendered him conscious that his untimely vanity had met with its proper punishment. "Well," said he, "let us not quarrel about the past, and what cannot be recalled. Tell me something respecting the family here. Is it likely that I shall always have to labour as hard as I have done to-day?"

"That depends upon Mr. Bronde," answered Rachel. "If you make yourself useful he may perhaps lighten your work. But I don't know, for he is a hard man, and likes to get as much as possible out of every one about him. But I will give you a piece of advice. The young lady and her aunt have persuaded him into the notion of making a garden behind the house, and it is to be begun without delay. Now, do you tell him that you know something of that kind of work, and I'll warrant he 'll employ you upon it.

You will then always be near the house, and have much easier times than if you continue to toil upon the farm."

Deveral felt much pleased with this suggestion, and resolving to adopt it as soon as a favourable opportunity offered, went to his chamber in a less desponding frame of mind than upon the preceding evening; and his spirits were still further elevated when he found that he was not again to be made a prisoner, but that the door of his room would in future remain unlocked during the night. Next morning, the labours of the preceding day were resumed, and severe as he felt them, he hesitated whether he should at once explain his wishes to Mr. Bronde, or wait for a week, when his diligence and good conduct, which he intended to render conspicuous during that time, would dispose the latter to give him a favourable hearing. But on the other hand, he dreaded lest his assiduity and increasing expertness at the work which was now assigned to him, should excite Mr. Bronde's approbation, and make him unwilling to withdraw a valuable labourer from so important a branch of the business of the farm. Deveral could hardly sum-

mon up resolution to address his master in the style of humility and respect that was requisite to the success of his proposed application. He easily perceived that Mr. Bronde was totally his inferior in manners, education, and knowledge, and that he was a person with whom he should have felt ashamed to have been seen associating, previous to the unfortunate hour in which his own guilt and degradation were effected. He often wished that he had been placed under some colonist of very low rank, where the vast mental disparity existing between them would have thrown them respectively so far asunder, as to make the servant forget that he was of the same species as his master.

Four days passed with Deveral in the routine of labour above described. On returning home in the evenings, he usually found himself obliged to submit to the society of Rachel, who never failed to seek his company, and to engage him in conversation. Though he disliked and despised her, and felt a degradation in having any intercourse with her, he distinctly perceived that it was his interest, if not to conciliate her, at least to avoid offending or making her his enemy

by a reserved or contemptuous style of behaviour. She possessed, in a great measure, the control of his comforts, and had a knowledge of the family and of various particulars connected with the surrounding country and its inhabitants, which she freely communicated, and which had already proved useful to him in several instances, and was likely to do so again. He had not yet seen Miss Bronde, or her niece Harriet, except at a distance; but the account which Rachel gave of the kind dispositions of the one, and the personal attractions of the other, awakened his interest and curiosity, and made him anxious to recommend himself to their notice.

Deveral one morning before going to work, observed Mr. Bronde measuring a piece of ground near the house, and laying it out in subdivisions. This satisfied him that the garden was in progress, and that no time was to be lost in applying for the superintendence of it. He therefore addressed Mr. Bronde upon the subject in the course of the day, stating that his former habits of life, combined with a little knowledge of gardening, qualified him better

for work of that kind than for what he was then engaged in. His master heard him attentively, and then replied, "Your request is far from being an unreasonable one, but I fear that it cannot be granted. You know that there are two females in my family, and I have too much respect for their feelings to permit a convict to be constantly within their observation, and to labour even for my own benefit in a spot which ought to be dedicated to innocence and pleasure."

"And am I, then, an object of abhorrence?" exclaimed Deveral. "Do you know the crime for which I am exiled? The circumstances connected with the commission of it you cannot know, and it is useless for me to relate them, as I have no means of enforcing belief. I am aware that I must submit to be treated as a common convict, but I have a right to demand the exercise of that charity which ought to be extended to all persons of the kind. Even supposing that I have been guilty of great crimes, cannot repentance and reformation have taken place during my voyage from England?"

"I do not dispute the correctness of all this,"

replied Mr. Bronde. "But, without reflecting upon you in particular, I am resolved to adhere to the principle which makes me unwilling to familiarize virtuous and well educated females to the sight of a public criminal."

Mr. Bronde walked away, and Deveral, seeing that he was resolute in adhering to his first declaration, did not attempt to make any reply; but in a melancholy mood resumed his work. On his return home in the evening, he communicated his bad success to Rachel, and was engaged in conversation with her when Miss Hasmere passed slowly along at a little distance, and appeared to view the parties with considerable attention. Deveral felt indescribably annoyed at being discovered in such a situation by the young lady, for it struck him that she would immediately conclude, from his intimacy with Rachel, that both were of the same rank of life, and mutually congenial to each other. He became excessively agitated, and receded from his female companion, and assumed towards her an air of condescension, though in doing so, he could hardly avoid smiling at his own weakness. Conscience told him that vanity was the controll-

ing principle at the moment, and that he would have enjoyed greater satisfaction in being able to prove to Miss Hasmere that he was a gentleman by birth and education, than in successfully vindicating himself from the guilt which was attached to his character as a convict.

Harriet's appearance pleased and interested him, and he regarded her with a sigh, for he recollected the time when his attentions were courted, and his admiration valued, by beings more fair and attractive than herself. She wore a white muslin dress, and her figure, though somewhat inclined to stoutness, was free, easy, and graceful in its motions. Her pale straw bonnet had slid from its proper position, and was retained on the back part of her head by ribbons tied loosely under her chin, and her dark brown hair was thus allowed to fall in profuse curls upon her forehead and temples. Her cheek, though delicately and beautifully flushed, did not wear the serene and steady hue of content and cheerfulness, but its colour was of that kind which deepens and fades without any visible cause, and without the will or even consciousness of its possessor. Her eyes were languid, and

bent downwards upon a flowery sprig which she carried in her hands, and carelessly stript of its leaves, dropping them upon the path as she went along.

Rachel, who was seated when Harriet first came in view, immediately rose, and continued standing until she had passed by, at the same time returning with a low courtesy the slight inclination of the head which the young lady had previously bestowed upon her. Deveral observed this as he leant against the wall in melancholy silence, and was pleased with Rachel's affectionate respectfulness of behaviour, and began to reflect upon the constraining influence which female beauty and innocence never fail to exert upon the minds of even the most depraved and heartless of human beings.

" She is too fine a plant for this rude country," said Rachel, " and it was a cruel thing to bring her to it. I reckon she 'll die for want of a companion. Unless the old uncle makes a shepherdess of her, I don't know any good that she can ever come to. I often wish myself a lady for her sake, that I might be fit company for her in this solitude. Where shall we find a

young man here that is worthy to look up to her?"

Deveral made no reply to this soliloquy. A variety of emotions that had long lain dormant now agitated his bosom. The magic though temporary presence of the charming Harriet; the contrast between her unsuspected innocence and his proclaimed guilt; the interminable gulf that divided him from her, and prevented his approaching, or even hoping to approach her, with accents of admiration; the remembrance of past and youthful love; a vivid sense of the desolateness of his condition, and of the misery of being cut off from the enjoyment of society and the best pleasures of the world; and a passionate desire of revisiting his native country; assailed his heart at the same moment, and warred one with another till they lost their individuality, and found egress in a flood of tears. Rachel observed him with surprise and curiosity, and maintained a respectful silence till his agitation had somewhat subsided. She then addressed to him some general expressions of consolation, and Deveral was almost insensibly drawn into giving a narrative of his life, and of

the circumstances that had led to his transportation to New South Wales. A woman always listens to a man's private history with attention, and often with gratitude, when it is communicated by himself. The heart of Rachel, seared as it was by a course of profligacy, could not resist Deveral's eloquence; and when he had concluded his tale, she declared that it must be true in every particular, and that she had from the first believed him to be a gentleman who was more unfortunate than guilty. Deveral observed with pleasure the confidence which she seemed to place in his veracity, and after cautioning her against communicating his real circumstances and former rank of life to any of the family, left her, and took a stroll upon the farm.

CHAPTER II.

Mr. Bronde, pursuant to his first intention, had employed one of the free labourers in making the projected garden; but this man fell ill in a few days, and at the request of Miss Bronde, and after some opposition by her brother, Deveral, to his great joy, was chosen to supply the sick man's place, and he accordingly commenced work without delay.

Nature had already done much for the spot which was to form the scene of his labours. It was about two acres in extent, and had at first partaken of the usual character of the surface of New South Wales, and been covered with brushwood, and interspersed with small clumps of trees. All the former had been removed, but most of the latter still remained, and having acquired increased vigour and beauty, in consequence of the destruction of the undergrowth, they were highly ornamental, as well as useful

on account of the shade which they afforded. The site of the garden was already inclosed by a rude fence, and Deveral's first business was to lay out the walks and beds, which he did in such a manner as to meet the approbation of Mr. Bronde and his sister, and he hoped also of Harriet, for though she did not approach him like her uncle and aunt, he perceived that she viewed what was going forward from the window of her apartment with an appearance of considerable interest. Deveral, though he had never before engaged personally in gardening, knew something of the theory of it, and recollected enough of what he had seen of the practice in the country parts of England to enable him to perform his task without any display either of ignorance or awkwardness.

At the back part of the garden, and in the midst of a thick clump of trees, were the remains of a small hut, which probably had been erected by the first owner of the farm. It was thatched with grass, and scarcely calculated to afford shelter from a shower of rain, but Deveral no sooner saw it than he became desirous of making it his own abode, and proposed to Mr.

Bronde to do so, under the plea that cattle, kangaroos, and other wild animals would be liable to break through the inclosures at night, for the purpose of feeding upon the vegetables, unless some one resided upon the spot, and was in readiness to prevent their depredations. Mr. Bronde admitted the justness of this suggestion, and did not object to Deveral's changing his quarters for such a praiseworthy object. The latter accordingly set about putting the hut in a little better repair, though the fineness and certainty of the weather at the time rendered this almost unnecessary, in so far as regarded warmth and dryness. However he engaged in the work with ardour and satisfaction, for he now had the prospect of being able to live in comparative seclusion from those objects that were most calculated to awaken painful impressions, and also to avoid those daily rencounters with Rachel which had hitherto proved so offensive to his feelings.

Deveral's abode, though not more than five hundred yards from the dwelling-house, was completely hid from view, and so sequestered, and surrounded with shrubbery, that while within it, he neither heard nor saw what was going on in

his immediate neighbourhood. He worked most assiduously in the garden, and for a considerably longer period daily, than his employer had required of him; but at sunset, he generally quitted the scene of his labours, and wandered into a piece of forest, that extended backwards the whole width of the farm. Here he amused himself in examining the trees and plants that are peculiar to the country, and searching for the habitations of the natives, with some of whom he had several times had a slight intercourse, and he would often insensibly be led so far into the recesses of the woods, as to experience some difficulty in retracing his way homewards. During these rambles, he enjoyed great serenity of mind, and frequently altogether forgot that he was a degraded and an involuntary exile from his native land. His duties in the garden employed and interested him all day, and the hours of relaxation which succeeded were so grateful, as to absorb his thoughts, and withdraw them from the indulgence of vain regrets or unpleasing subjects of contemplation. When the weather did not admit of his pursuing his usual labours out of doors, he busied himself in improving the inte-

rior of his little dwelling, and furnishing it with such articles of convenience and taste, as the limited means and materials in his power enabled him to manufacture. With Rachel he scarcely ever had any communication, except when accidentally passing her place of abode; and she did not appear disposed to seek his company in the way she had formerly done, probably because she was now convinced of his superiority to herself in every thing, and felt that there could no longer be any sociality between them.

Things went on in this way nearly a month, during which Deveral never relaxed his industry. The garden had now assumed somewhat of a neat and regular appearance, and Harriet sometimes strolled into it in the evenings, but never until she had first ascertained that Deveral had retired from work. He remarked her extreme caution in this respect, and felt annoyed, not only because he was deprived of the pleasure of seeing her, except by stealth, but because it shewed a dislike to himself, or at least a fastidious and cold-hearted refinement, that forbade her venturing within a certain distance of him, because he was a convict. However, he could

not but be conscious, that he began to regard Harriet with too much interest, and with emotions which were in the highest degree unsuitable to his condition. But situated as he was, how could it be otherwise? He had first seen her shortly after being liberated from a confinement of four months' duration, in a den of profligacy, and amongst a crowd of outcasts; he had unexpectedly found a beautiful and attractive girl, in a solitude where any but the rudest of human beings seemed out of place; and his solitary mode of life, and the benignant nature of his employments, were calculated to dispose his heart to the exercise of all the tender affections.

Often now did Deveral, after finishing his day's work, retire amongst the shrubbery which surrounded his hut, and wait to obtain a view of Harriet, instead of seeking the woods, and amusing himself in them as formerly. He dared not enter the garden while she was there, as he knew that his presence would immediately put her to flight. He had reason to believe that neither she, nor her uncle or aunt, entertained the least suspicion that he had originally been a gentleman, and had moved in a higher sphere

than themselves; but the contempt or aversion which Harriet evinced towards him, affected his feelings so acutely, that he often wished for an opportunity of disclosing to her his real pretensions, though he could not flatter himself that any purpose would be gained by his doing so, except the gratification of his personal vanity.

One evening Harriet lingered particularly long in the garden, and Deveral, who was watching her in concealment, fancied that she never had before looked so beautiful or so melancholy. It occurred to him, that it would be a favourable time to attract her attention, and perhaps touch her heart, and possessing a fine voice, and much musical taste, he sung an empassioned Italian air, with all the delicacy and expression that suited its language; taking care that she should neither see him, nor suppose that he was aware of her presence. The first few notes made her start and pause. She continued on the same spot till the conclusion of the song, and then looked cautiously and hesitatingly in the direction from whence it had proceeded. After a few moments, she walked slowly towards the house, but several times stopped and listened, and seemed

inclined to turn back, as if in expectation of enjoying a repetition of the music. At length she appeared to feel that there was an impropriety in her remaining longer in the garden for such a purpose, and she hastened beyond its precincts.

Deveral, though not entirely satisfied with the manner in which his serenade had been received, resolved to repeat it the first opportunity, and to use every means in his power to awaken the curiosity of Harriet, and make her feel an interest in his fate. In planning all this, he had no distinct object in view; but he loved and passionately admired Miss Hasmere, and felt, that to become the subject of her thoughts and her sympathy for even a short period daily, would afford him a degree of consolation such as he could not hope to derive from any other source. "And why," exclaimed he to himself, "why should I continue to disguise my real rank and qualifications, and unnecessarily reduce myself to a level with other convicts? I may at least shew that I am infinitely better born, and better educated, than the majority of my brother exiles, though I shall not find it so easy to prove that I am less guilty. Perhaps, too, a know-

ledge of my true condition may excite the commiseration of my employer, and be the means of improving my lot while here, and securing to me indulgences which would not otherwise be granted.

This fallacious kind of reasoning soon led him to determine upon letting the different members of Mr. Bronde's family know in some way or other, that he was a gentleman of birth and education; and he hoped, that after having satisfied them upon this point, the other parts of his story would obtain credit. Every time that Harriet entered the garden, he found means to draw her attention to himself, either by singing, or by bringing within her notice some evidence of his taste and accomplishments. At length, he ventured to come out of his hut, and pass within a short distance of her, and perceived with delight, that she betrayed none of her former timidity and aversion, but rather seemed to regard him with some degree of curiosity and benevolence.

One day, having resolved to go a step further than he had hitherto done, he collected the best of the few flowers which the garden afforded,

and adding to them some wild ones gathered in the woods, made the whole into a bouquet. In the evening he dressed himself with as much neatness as possible, and anxiously awaited the appearance of Harriet, who fortunately came to take a stroll at the usual hour. On first seeing her, he felt much agitated, and could scarcely command boldness enough to put his design in execution, but making a strong effort, he approached her, and bowing profoundly, presented her with the flowers, at the same time requesting that she would favour him with her commands respecting any improvements or alterations that she might wish to be made in the garden. Besides the unexpectedness of his address, the emotion which attended it, startled her a good deal, and at first she coloured and drew back, but the next moment, her countenance assumed an expression of calm benevolence which enchanted Deveral, and she received the bouquet, and saying in the blandest accents that she had no instructions to give respecting the garden, walked slowly onwards in the direction which she had formerly pursued.

A few days after this, Miss Bronde, assisted

by Rachel, was engaged in some domestic arrangements in the apartment in which Harriet sat amusing herself with ornamental needlework. Her aunt desired Rachel to send Deveral to the farm with a message, but happening to look from the window, and seeing him busily employed in the garden, she countermanded her orders, observing, that it would be wrong to interrupt his work at that time.

"No, no, madam," cried Rachel, "rather say that it would be right to do so. He allows himself no leisure. He will toil himself to death, unless he is told to take more ease and pleasure than he does."

"He certainly is a most diligent servant," replied Miss Bronde. "When I first learned that we were to have a convict working about the place, I got frightened, thinking that he would prove altogether useless, besides giving a great deal of trouble. Now Deveral has hitherto behaved as well and as quietly as the most honest and virtuous person could have done."

"Surely," answered Rachel, "it is not surprising that one of his condition should behave well."

"Condition!" repeated Miss Bronde; "what do you mean? Is he not a common criminal, like hundreds of others, that are every year transported to this country?"

"Not at all, madam," returned Rachel; "he is a gentleman born and bred. It's a scandal to the government that he ever was brought here. He told me all his story, and it would have brought the tears into your eyes to have heard it. Though the law made him guilty of forgery, he is not so according to common sense. He put another man's name to a bill, that he might save his old mother from being carried to prison, and when he did so, expected to be able to pay the sum himself before the bill was presented. See in what a sweet gentle way he has behaved since he came here. Depend upon it, he is even better than he acknowledges himself to be." Rachel now proceeded to tell Deveral's story in detail, and Miss Bronde and Harriet listened to her unadorned and unaffected narrative with the deepest interest.

Rachel having concluded the tale, Miss Bronde said, "I think that Mr. Deveral's conduct since he came here, goes far to prove the

truth of what you have related concerning him; as also do his manners and personal appearance; but notwithstanding this, I dislike the idea of having in our service, a person whose rank has been superior to our own; for one would wish to treat him differently from a common menial, and yet it may not always be either convenient or proper to do so. I am sorry to find that Mr. Deveral belongs to such a high sphere. I hope no evil may come of it to him or to ourselves."

"La, madam! what should you have to fear?" exclaimed Rachel. "Mr. Deveral is not the first gentleman that has been reduced to such straits. I dare say that good fortune will some day or other restore him to what he once was. About twelve years ago, a gentleman who had once served in the king's army, was transported to Botany Bay, for some crime that had less substance than shadow in it. They did not treat him like other convicts, but allowed him to walk about, and to dress as he pleased, and so it happened, that one day an officer who was an old acquaintance of his, met him in the street, and thinking that he had come out to join his regiment, shook hands with him, and asked him to

dine at the mess that same evening. The other kept his secret, but refused the invitation, saying that he had come to the country as a settler, being too poor to live at home, and that he was just on the point of starting for a distant part of the colony. Nothing was heard of him for seven years, which was his term of banishment, though before that time had passed, a great deal of money had been left to him by a relation at home. When at liberty to leave the country, he went back to England, claimed his fortune, and then changed his name, and returned here, and bought a fine farm, where he is now living. He liked the country so much while a convict, that he preferred it to every other when made a gentleman. So you may perceive that people who have kept good company in England, don't always find it a misery or a misfortune to be transported to New South Wales."

Though Harriet had taken no part in the conversation above detailed, she had been a most attentive listener. Every thing she had hitherto observed respecting Deveral, seemed to confirm the truth of Rachel's statement; and a thousand trivial circumstances, indicating his mental su-

periority, now struck her as having attracted her notice at different times, though without producing those conclusions which she now formed in regard to his real character. There was a mixture of romance and debasement in his condition, which agitated her strangely; and she at one moment pitied his errors, and believed him to be morally guiltless and noble in his nature, and at another, accused herself of thinking too favourably of him, and felt fearful, lest the extent and true character of his crimes had not been revealed to her.

One bright moonlight evening about this period, Deveral happened to extend his walk much beyond its usual limits. After passing through two miles of open forest which he had often before traversed, he was about to return home, when his attention was attracted by the indistinct gleaming of a fire, about three hundred yards off. He at first supposed that some families of natives were encamped upon the spot, but he soon found himself mistaken in this conjecture, for he heard voices talking loudly in his own language, though he could not distinguish what was said. This discovery, while it awakened his

curiosity, suggested the propriety of his observing some degree of caution in approaching the strangers, for he knew that there was no farm, or European settlement of any kind in the neighbourhood, and therefore had every reason to suspect that they were engaged in some secret or unlawful purpose.

Guided by the light, he cautiously advanced, and shortly found himself opposite to the mouth of a ravine, which, though inconsiderable in length and depth, had several sinuosities. These concealed from his view the fire which burned at its upper extremity, where also the people seemed to be assembled. Deveral now hesitated how to proceed, for it occured to him, as the bottom of the ravine was narrow, that should he follow its course, and on reaching its termination find himself in danger, he would be unable to escape in any direction but that in which he had come, owing to the steepness of the banks on each side of him. However, to approach the edge from above, and look down into the ravine, seemed nearly impracticable, on account of the woodedness of the adjoining surface, and he determined

to reconnoitre the objects of his curiosity by the easiest and shortest path.

On reaching the upper part of the ravine, he concealed himself behind a large fragment of rock, which lay within a few yards of the fire. Around it were seated three individuals, whose colour alone proved that they were Europeans, for their dress was not in the style of either civilized or savage life, but a mixture of both. However, he who appeared to be the senior of the party wore an article calculated to give some insight into his past history. This was a convict's jacket, or rather the remains of one, for it had nearly lost its colour, and hung in tatters around his body. Upon his head was a cap made of kangaroo skin, and a broad belt, apparently of the same material, encircled his waist, and served as a depository for two pistols of the largest size, and a ship's cutlass, of corresponding dimensions. A shot bag and powder horn completed this part of his equipment, and a fowling piece lay on the ground beside him. His features were coarse and bold in their lineaments, but withal so much concealed by the profuse

bushiness of his whiskers and beard, that little of his countenance, except the nose, eyes, and points of the cheek bones, was discernible. He was seated on a large stone, his right elbow resting upon his knees, and his head leaning upon one hand, while the other supported a pipe between his lips. He smoked with an air of languid indifference, but seemed to find particular pleasure in ejecting the fumes of the tobacco in such a way as made them circle in clouds around his head. But though his body was in a state of repose, his eyes were in constant activity, glancing from one side to another with a kind of habitual vivacity, which seemed to declare that their possessor passed much of his life in adventurous pursuits, and in that apprehension of danger that usually attends them.

The two companions of the individual just described, bore a general similarity to him in external appearance, but they were not so well armed, having fowling pieces, but neither pistols nor cutlasses. Deveral surveyed the party for a few moments, and then stepped boldly forwards to the fire. They sprung upon their feet

when they saw him, and seized their arms and closed around him.

"Whom have we here?" cried the senior, whose name was Denby. "Speak! answer!" continued he, addressing Deveral, and at the same time pulling a pistol from his belt. "We'll make short work if you don't."

"Be patient," said Deveral; "I have neither the power nor the design of injuring you. I belong to the nearest farm. While taking my usual walk, I perceived this fire at a distance, and curiosity led me towards it."

"This sounds well," returned Denby; "but you must satisfy me further before I can let you go. When we get a spy into our hands we take care that he shall not have an opportunity of acting that part again. Who are you? Tell me again. Did you pay your passage to this country?"

Deveral replied in the negative, with some degree of embarrassment, and a general laugh followed from those around him. "My appearance," said he, "ought to convince you that you have no reason to distrust me. I am totally

unarmed, and have no associates to protect or assist me. Will you now inform me who you are, and permit me to depart?"

"Neither, neither, at present," returned Denby. "Sit down amongst us for a while, and give us a little of your history." Deveral thought it safest to comply, and he accordingly took his place by the fire, and drank off a small quantity of brandy, which one of the men presented to him in a large limpet shell, such as the natives of New South Wales use for holding water. Denby now proceeded to question him minutely how long he had been in the country; what kind of person his master was; how he liked his service; how many people there were upon the farm; and whether its owner possessed much moveable property. Deveral answered all these and other similar enquiries unreservedly and circumstantially, and his interrogator seemed to place confidence in the accuracy of his replies. The examination being concluded, Denby rose up, and desiring Deveral to remain where he was, retired a little way with his companions, and talked to them in a suppressed tone of voice, and apparently entered

into a consultation upon some subject connected either with Deveral himself, or with the communications into which he had recently been drawn.

In a little time Denby returned to the fire, and thus addressed Deveral:—"Look you, young man, you just now asked me who I was; I will now inform you. Perhaps you have already heard of a set of bold, high spirited gentlemen, called bush-rangers by the quiet people of the colony? My companions and myself belong to the band, and you are now about to have the honour of assisting us in one of our expeditions, or rather pleasure-parties, for such we consider them amongst ourselves."

Deveral had several times heard the bush-rangers spoken of, but was scarcely aware who or what they were, which he now deeply regretted, for had he known any particulars concerning them, a single glance at Denby and his associates would have satisfied his curiosity, and rendered him most unwilling to encounter them. The men called bush-rangers are convicts of a desperate character, who make their escape into the woods, and forming themselves into gangs,

subsist by plundering remote farms, and robbing the settlers, whenever they can find an opportunity. They have no fixed place of residence, but wander from one spot to another, like gipsies, and form a temporary abode under the trees, in ravines, or among rocks, except during the rainy season, when they frequently build huts not unlike those of the natives. Their chief objects of spoliation are provisions, spirituous liquors, clothes, and gunpowder; and their robberies are in general accompanied with acts of wanton barbarity, particularly when they meet with any resistance, or run the risk of future detection and capture.

"The information you have given us," continued Denby, "makes us anxious to lighten Mr. Bronde of a little of his property. As he is in a thriving way, he will soon be able to retrieve what he may lose by our visit; so up with you, and let us be off!"

"I don't understand this," returned Deveral. "Do you wish to make me one of your party? Though a convict, I am not a robber. I will not go."

"Oh, we don't require that you should either

plunder or fight," answered Denby. "Lead us the nearest way to Mr. Bronde's farm, and having done so, you shall be permitted to quit our company."

"No inducement would make me commit an act of such treachery," cried Deveral. "I am Mr. Bronde's servant, and will not betray him. In quitting my native country, I did not leave my honour behind me."

"Honour!" exclaimed Denby, with a loud laugh. "What has a convict like yourself to do with any thing of the kind? Will your master give you credit for having it? But if you conduct yourself well now, I shall bestow a little of it upon you, by admitting you into our gang. Come along, lads; let 's be off. The moon will shortly fail us. And you, honourable sir, lead the way."

"I will not stir upon such an errand," cried Deveral, firmly. "Nay, I do not fear you. Pistols and swords have powerful influence with a man who stands high in the opinion of the world, and is the favourite of fortune, but to a miserable wretch like me they cause few terrors. I am resolute," continued he, seating himself

upon the ground. "Which of you is coward enough to strike an unarmed man?"

"Is this fellow more fool or knave?" exclaimed one of the bush-rangers, at the same time hitting Deveral on the forehead with the butt end of his fowling-piece. "Nay, nay," said Denby, interposing; "let us have none of this. Were he a settler I should despatch him at once, but being one of ourselves, as it were, he is entitled to some grace. Wait a little. He is now new to the country. I 'll warrant you he 'll become a ranger in less than a twelvemonth, and a prime one he 'll make, for he has a spirit of his own. Let us give up our plan for to-night; I don't take kindly with it somehow or other."

"Aye, aye," said one of his associates; "that is always the way; there 's no depending upon you. But I must give this obstinate bear a parting salute." Seizing Denby's cutlass, he struck Deveral across the shoulder, and wounded him, and then, along with his companions, proceeded down the bottom of the ravine, leaving the former lying alone by the fire.

Deveral was stunned by the first blow, but

the pain of the second restored his senses, and perceiving that it bled profusely, he bound it up as well as he could, and taking a stick to support him, set out for home, congratulating himself that he had escaped with his life, and also been the means of saving Mr. Bronde from the attacks of the bush-rangers, at least for a time. But though he felt that his conduct had been highly meritorious, he was aware that he had done wrong in wandering so far from the farm, and would be likely to incur his master's censure for having exceeded the limits usually prescribed to convicts.

Rendered weak by the loss of blood, he was able to advance but slowly, and it was late when he reached his hut. He immediately requested Rachel to assist him in dressing his wound, while he communicated to her the adventures of the evening, of which he intended also to have informed Mr. Bronde without delay; but as he had gone to bed, Deveral thought it better not to disturb him, for it seemed in the highest degree improbable that the bush-rangers would attempt to plunder the farm that night.

Next morning Deveral found himself unable

to resume his usual work, on account of the state of his shoulder. Mr. Bronde visited him in his hut, at an early hour, and received from him a detail of his rencounter with the bush-rangers, and of the circumstances which had led to his being wounded. The former heard the whole affair with apparent unconcern, and after coldly applauding the resolution which Deveral had shewn in refusing to act as their guide to the farm, declared that it was his intention to make immediate arrangements for its defence, lest Denby and his associates should meditate a future attack. He then retired, telling Deveral that he should enjoy every comfort which his situation might require.

In the course of the day, Deveral was consoled by a visit from two individuals of kinder dispositions than his master. These were Miss Bronde and her niece, both of whom warmly thanked him for having exposed himself to so much danger on their account. He was not aware that Rachel had made them acquainted with his history, though he suspected as much, from the peculiarity of their manner, and the prying and indirect nature of a variety of ques-

tions which were addressed to him by Miss Bronde.

Deveral's recovery was rapid, and six days after his accident he found himself able to leave his hut, and work a little in the garden. His feelings had recently undergone a great change. The confinement and interruption of his usual labours arising from his wound, had served to abstract his mind from those ideas of servitude and degradation which had previously haunted it at all times. The kind interest in his recovery which the female part of the family had evinced, raised him in his own estimation, and made him feel that he was not an utter outcast, but that he still could command the sympathies of the respectable and virtuous part of the human race; and the service that he had rendered Mr. Bronde seemed to entitle him to a degree of consideration which he had not hitherto enjoyed, and which he determined to solicit and merit by a resigned and patient endurance of his lot.

It was while under the influence of these feelings, that he, one evening, met Harriet in the garden. He had just been working a little, and

after inquiring how he found himself, she cautioned him against exerting his wounded arm much for some time to come.

"I thank you for your advice," returned he, "but it has now entirely recovered its strength. My accident has been a source of pleasure to me rather than of regret, since it has proved the means of making you express some interest in my fate. Oh, Miss Hasmere, do not accuse me of presumption, when I tell you that I have much greater claims upon your sympathy than my present degraded condition would seem to indicate. Of the hardened guilt of the convict I know nothing. With the vicious practices of the vulgar criminal, I am utterly unacquainted. My present humiliation has not been attended with any corresponding debasement of mind. The commission of crimes is foreign to my nature, and imprudence and impetuosity of temper alone hurried me into that act for which I now suffer so severely."

"Every one is aware, I believe," replied Harriet, "that those who are so unfortunate as to be exiled to this colony are not all equally criminal, either in a legal or a moral point of view.

Different offences often necessarily meet the same kind and degree of punishment; and it would be uncharitable and unjust to suppose that, because two persons have committed the same crime, the amount of moral guilt must be the same in both instances."

"These inferences are correct," answered Deveral, "but they are too general to afford me any consolation. My case is a particular one. I am a gentleman by birth and education, and still continue so, as far as regards honour and honesty. I committed forgery under the impulse of filial affection. It is true that I had before wasted in dissipation and extravagance a mother's property, and nearly reduced her to poverty, but it was the urgency of her distress that led me into guilt,—not habits of fraud or any motive of selfish indulgence."

"I know your story," said Harriet, in a faltering voice. "Rachel told it to my aunt and myself as she had it from your own lips. Spare yourself the repetition of such an agitating tale, and be assured that we are fully disposed to place confidence in its truth. But, alas! what can we do for you? How can we ameliorate

your condition? We may believe that you suffer unjustly, but it is not in our power to reverse the sentence of the law."

"All that I ask," returned Deveral, "is *your* favourable opinion, and that of the other members of the family. Your pure mind can easily imagine what misery there must be in lying under the suspicion of deep guilt, without the means or hope of being able to prove one's comparative innocence. The labours that are imposed upon me I totally disregard, and my exclusion from society I bear with resignation; but the idea of being considered a common criminal is abhorrent to my feelings. Let me entreat you, if you value my happiness, to give Mr. Bronde and your aunt a correct idea of what I really am. In soliciting this favour, I do not aspire to be treated better, or to be allowed more liberty and indulgence than hitherto. I shall be contented to toil all day, and to seclude myself in my hut at night, if I am blessed with the confidence of those around me, which I now boldly and fearlessly assert will never be found to have been misplaced. Oh, Miss Hasmere, though I stand here in the guise of a convict, look not upon me

with that horror and contempt which individuals of the kind generally, and perhaps justly, excite."

"Indeed you mistake my feelings," answered Harriet. "I implicitly believe that you have been more unfortunate than guilty, and shall endeavour to impress the same conviction on the minds of my uncle and Miss Bronde. I would that circumstances permitted me to attempt more, —but this is a part of the world where the exercise of doubt and suspicion is more congenial to the heart than that of any benevolent impulse."

Harriet now retired, and Deveral remained gazing after her until she had left the garden, and then seated himself among the shrubbery around his hut, gratified by the conversation that had just taken place.

Several times, in the course of next day, did Harriet seek an opportunity of speaking to Mr. Bronde in favour of Deveral, and of communicating to him the history of the latter; but her resolution always failed when she was about to introduce the subject, and a degree of embarrassment and agitation, the cause of which she

could not well explain, checked the execution of her purpose. She was aware, however, that her timidity arose partly from the idea that her uncle would express both surprise and resentment when he found that she had been holding a conversation with Deveral, and had, as it were, become his confidante. This unpleasant consideration did not make her abandon her first design, but Miss Bronde fortunately anticipated it, by repeating to her brother all that Rachel had said respecting Deveral; and stating her conviction that he was every thing that he professed to be. Mr. Bronde listened to her with an expression of contempt, and said that he did not believe a word of the story, adding, that it was a common thing for convicts to endeavour to excite the interest and sympathy of their employers, by pretending to be less criminal, and of greater personal consequence than they really were.

Harriet did not say a word in defence of Deveral, for she perceived that her interference would have been of no avail. She now regarded him with additional interest, and persuaded herself that she was bound to attempt something on

his behalf, since there was no probability that any other person would do so; but in what manner she was to benefit and assist him, was a point upon which she found considerable difficulty in coming to any decision. However, her daily companion and instructress, a vivid imagination, suggested a variety of schemes in aid of her design, and filled her distempered mind with romantic visions of every description.

CHAPTER III.

The conversation which Deveral had enjoyed with Harriet, while it soothed his mind and gratified his feelings, awakened many emotions that ought to have lain dormant. He felt, that while he remained a convict, love, in any shape, was a passion which he could not consistently or conscientiously indulge; but he found himself unable to resist the impression made by Harriet's attractions and manners, and she formed the constant subject of his thoughts; and it was in vain that he endeavoured to persuade himself that gratitude alone, for her kindness and courtesy, had rendered her image so dear to his heart. He continued to seek every opportunity of meeting her, and employed all his hours in studying how he could best give her proof of the reality of those pretensions to which he had made a claim. Whenever circumstances enabled him to exhibit an instance of taste, or a

proof of knowledge, or the slightest evidence of mental cultivation, he did so, in order that he might rise in her estimation; and he daily taxed his ingenuity to contrive ways of rendering conspicuous the variety of his accomplishments and acquirements.

Harriet was not unobservant of the anxiety which he displayed to secure her good graces, and while his assiduousness flattered her vanity, the frequent displays of mental and personal superiority which he contrived to bring under her notice, strengthened her conviction of his moral innocence, and of the inherent dignity and refinement of his nature. She did not avoid his presence as she had formerly done, but often conversed a little with him, always, however, maintaining a reserve of manner sufficient to shew that any attempt at equality, or social freedom, would be resented on her part. Deveral perceived this, and admired the sense of propriety which it indicated, though it rendered his intercourse with her both ceremonious and constrained.

One day he found in the garden a few detached leaves of a book, which had probably been

blown thither by the wind. He considered these an extremely valuable acquisition, for he had not before even seen a printed page of any kind since the period of his landing at Sydney. Though the subject was not particularly interesting, he perused the sheets several times, and Harriet having twice observed him doing so, requested to know the nature of his studies. "These fragments", replied he, "appear to be part of a biographical dictionary, and they form my whole library. I have not seen a book for several months past. Formerly I should have thrown aside the detached pages which I now hold in my hand, without bestowing a glance upon them, but now their contents appear to abound in interest."

"I can easily imagine," said Harriet, after a pause, "that the want of books must, to you, be a great privation. However, it is partly in my power to remedy the evil. We have a small library, and as you are fond of reading, and destitute of other amusement, I think I can venture, with the approbation of my aunt, to lend you a few volumes occasionally."

Deveral expressed, in the strongest terms, his

sense of the kindness and condescension which had dictated this offer; but it struck him that Harriet almost repented having made it, and the truth is that she did; but respect for herself would not permit her to retract her promise, or attempt to evade the performance of it. She now began to consider in what manner the books should be delivered to Deveral, for to bring them into the garden herself would have something of humiliation in it, and she did not wish to give them publicly to him at the house. Desiring him to attend at one of the lower windows of the building, she returned home, and opening the sash, handed out to him several volumes, and then hastily retired to her own room. Here she became fully aware of the imprudence of which she had been guilty, and bitterly regretted her precipitation in having afforded Deveral such strong proofs of her confidence and regard. She dreaded informing her uncle or aunt of what she had done, and the idea of their accidentally discovering it was still more repugnant to her feelings, as they would, in that case, be likely to form the most degrading surmises upon the subject. These agitating reflections terminated in

a flood of tears, and she resolved to avoid entering the garden, or exposing herself to Deveral's observation, in any way, for several days to come.

Early one morning, while Deveral was at his usual work, Rachel came cautiously into the enclosure, and having looked round to discover if any one was observing her, she approached him, and enquired how he did. "I think," continued she, "we are likely to wear out of acquaintance soon, and it is no wonder, for a person of your degree cannot be expected to have much satisfaction in the company of such as myself. But perhaps, for all that, you would not be loth to do me a kindness?"

"Certainly not," replied Deveral; "there is little in my power; but I will oblige you as far as I properly and conveniently can. What is it you request?"

"Why you see as how it is this," answered Rachel. "About a month ago, I bought some things of one of those men who were working here when you first came. I promised to pay him for them at this time, because I had no money then, and I expect he will be here again to-morrow, or next day, to get what is due to him.

Now, as I cannot yet pay the amount, I wish you to lend me a trifle for the present."

"How can you think of asking such a thing?" cried Deveral. "I have not a shilling in the world. You must surely know that."

"Yes, yes," returned Rachel; "but Mr. Bronde, whose servant you are, is obliged, besides feeding and clothing you, to give you ten pounds a year, as wages. This is the rule, all over the colony. Now, as you have not yet received any of it, suppose you ask him for a small sum in advance. I 'll warrant he 'll agree to give it, particularly if you get Miss Harriet to speak a good word for you."

Deveral could make no reply for some moments. Never before had his condition appeared to him in such a humiliating point of view. For many weeks past, the nature of his daily employment, and the secludedness of his hut, had rendered him forgetful of the true character of his situation, and scarcely conscious of his being in a state of servitude. But Rachel's request, and subsequent explanation how it might be complied with, awakened him to a full sense of his wretchedness. The curse of poverty, the

baseness of his slave-like condition, the degrading idea of being fed and clothed by a master, and the thought of receiving the despicable pittance which formed the regulated remuneration for a year's manual labour, rushed upon his mind with agonizing vividness, and rendered him, for a time, insensible of Rachel's presence. She continued gazing upon him, fully aware that she was the cause of his agitation, but unable to comprehend why.

"No, Rachel," said he, recovering himself, "I cannot do what you require. Had I money in my possession, you should have the whole of it, but I will not submit to the disgrace of asking any from Mr. Bronde."

"Disgrace!" repeated she, with a sneer. "You say the word as if you did not understand what is meant by it. Some people are apt to forget what they are, in thinking of what they have been. Bye and bye you 'll be calling this your own garden, and making yourself out a better man than your master. Well then," continued she, placing her hands upon her sides, and advancing towards him, with a spiteful expression of countenance, "Is it yes, or is it no?"

"It is certainly no," answered Deveral, "and I do not wish to hear any thing more upon the subject."

"In that, I 'll use my own pleasure," returned Rachel; "but I 'll perhaps let other folks hear something that I happen to know. What brings Miss Harriet so often into the garden, my fine young gentleman? Is it to hear sweet words from you, or to lend you her old school books? Is it right for such as you to fill the young creature's ears with stories of your past days. Mr. Bronde shall hear of what has been going on, unless the cash be forthcoming at this time to-morrow."

She was about to add something more, but hearing footsteps a little way off, she stopped, and giving Deveral a significant look, sallied out of the garden. He threw aside his working implements, and shut himself up in his hut, and lay down upon its floor, with her threats still ringing in his ears. He feared not, cared not for himself; but he trembled lest Harriet should be irretrievably injured by the falsehoods which Rachel might invent respecting their intercourse, and by the testimony which the books would af-

ford in support of her assertions, however calumnious and unfounded. The peculiarity of Mr. Bronde's temper would lead him to put the worst construction upon his niece's conduct, and to magnify her imprudence into criminality; while Deveral's own presumption in seeking her notice, would appear alike monstrous and unpardonable. It several times occurred to him that he ought to conciliate Rachel, by endeavouring to obtain money for her; but when he considered that, after what had just passed between them, she would easily surmise the motive of his compliance with her request, and draw exaggerated inferences from it, and also regard him as being in her power for the future, he abandoned all idea of the kind, and thought it best to allow things to take their course. He was at a loss to determine whether Rachel herself had observed Harriet talking with him and giving the books, or whether she had employed an emissary to watch them, but, at all events, it was evident enough that they had been under a system of espionage for several weeks past.

That day and the following one passed without any particular occurrence, but Deveral re-

marked that Rachel had several times come within a short distance of him, and then walked away, intending, as he supposed, to afford him an opportunity of giving her the money, or explaining that it was forthcoming, should her threats have induced him to make the required application to Mr. Bronde. He did not once see Harriet either in the garden or anywhere else, and his uneasiness was so great, that even the books which he had received from her, failed in yielding him either amusement or consolation.

In the evening, while he was seated in his hut, its walls were shaken apparently by blows applied to them by some one outside, and he presently heard a voice say, "Come forth, Mr. Hermsdill; I wish to have a little conversation with you." He obeyed the summons, and found Mr. Bronde standing in front of the doorway.

"So you are here," continued the latter, ironically. "I did not think that a person of your rank would have condescended to attend my call. I find that, like other people of your class, you are disposed to take advantage of any

indulgence that may be shewn to you. When you were sent here from the factory, you complained that the farm-work was too severe for your strength, and requested to have charge of this garden; I complied because I thought you an honest well-meaning person, anxious to reform your ways; but how I have been deceived, and what ingratitude I have met with, your own conscience will inform you better than I can. Well, felon, what impositions are those which you have been practising upon my niece?"

"I have been guilty of none," cried Deveral; "a tissue of falsehoods has been invented to deceive you, and I know who is the author of them. That conscience to which you appeal, acquits me of every thing that is laid to my charge. I told the story of my misfortunes to Miss Hasmere, and she was generous enough to express her belief in it, and to commiserate my fate."

"Commiserate your fate!" repeated Mr. Bronde. "Wretched impostor! I have heard the history of yourself, which you are in the habit of telling to those who are credulous enough

to listen to it. I dare say the Newgate Calendar would furnish a very different version of the tale. I have always considered my niece a fool; but I never imagined that she was so silly as to believe a convict to be a gentleman, merely upon the strength of his own assertion, or so regardless of modesty, prudence, and propriety, as to degrade herself by associating with a common felon."

"Let me speak," said Deveral, attempting to be calm; "I am more concerned about the exculpation of your niece, than of myself. I utterly deny that she has ever degraded herself, or ever associated with me. I have, many times, been honoured by a few words from her while she walked in the garden; but, in no one instance, did her behaviour permit me for a moment to suppose that she considered me on a level with herself. Nor can I accuse myself of having trespassed upon her condescension either in thought, word, or deed."

"There you tell a falsehood," cried Mr. Bronde. "Did not you borrow books from her? I knew that you would not deny the fact, for the evidence of it is palpable. But I misspend my

time, in listening to any defence of your own conduct, or of hers. Your deceit and treachery would deserve contempt, had they not succeeded so well. I dare say you are proud of having imposed upon the poor girl, and made her disgrace herself, and throw an insult upon her family; but you shall suffer for your artful and insolent imposture, and be taught henceforth to confine yourself within the dastardly sphere in which, doubtless, you have always moved. I now order you hence. Be off to the farm, and commence work there, amongst the beasts of burden; and have a care how you give me any more instances of your presumption, lest the reward should be a pair of manacles, and weeks of solitary confinement."

"Sir, you shall yet listen to me," returned Deveral, with a desperate calmness, under the influence of which his frame seemed to stiffen, and his veins to thrill with cold:—"You have once, twice, thrice, accused me of falsehood. You have called me an impostor. Know then, that though I stand here in the character of a convict, and in the presence of a master, I have spirit enough to repel your charges with indigna-

tion, and to pronounce you a lying calumniator. I am what I say; I repeat that I am. You deny that I have ever held the rank of a gentleman. How dare you form any judgement upon the matter? Coarse, ignorant, and illiterate yourself, you evidently have been one of the pack-horses of the community, who toil to supply conveniences and luxuries to the refined part of society. Convict as I now am, I again assert that I have moved in a circle, into which such persons as yourself can gain admittance in the character of menials only. Hear me! I despise your threats,—I laugh at your promised punishments; and though suffering under the degradation of being your servant, you shall find that I am not your slave, and that I will not tamely submit to be traduced, vilified, and abused, whenever unfounded resentment, or brutal suspicion, may dispose you to select me as a butt for your tyranny."

The whole of Deveral's harangue was delivered with such rapidity of utterance, and such furious impetuosity, that Mr. Bronde was too much astonished to attempt interrupting him; but when he did pause, the latter, overcome

with rage, struck him a severe blow, and laid him prostrate before him. Deveral started up again, almost instantaneously, and rushed upon Mr. Bronde; but not possessing either his height or his personal strength, he was obliged to give way to him, his adversary forcing him against a tree, and retaining him there for some moments. He then released him, and they stood gazing upon each other in silence. Deveral's emotion deprived him of utterance, and Mr. Bronde seemed to feel that he had proceeded too far, and to be at a loss whether to retire or to wait till Deveral had become tranquil enough to speak.

"Accursed for ever be the hand that has insulted me!" cried Deveral. "May Heaven cause me to perish the moment that I either forget or forgive the blow which you have inflicted! You shall never see me again until I come to avenge myself. My fate is now sealed, but it is hard to say which of us two shall most bitterly rue the events of this night. Detested ruffian! if you possess a shadow of honour or courage, bring weapons, that we may fight upon

equal terms. I now free myself from bondage. Henceforth I defy your power!"

So saying, he darted off into the woods in the rear of the garden, and Mr. Bronde, having waited some time in the hope of seeing him return, abandoned all expectation of the kind, and went home in a state of uneasiness and anxiety, which he in vain attempted to overcome. He already fancied Deveral way-laying him in some retired part of the farm, and sacrificing him to his resentment; for he was acquainted with too many instances of the boldness and ferocity of runaway convicts not to entertain serious fears for his personal safety. Had he understood Deveral's character, he would have felt no alarms of the kind, and been disposed to consider his threats as the mere effusions of sudden anger; but believing him to be as vicious and unprincipled as persons of his class generally are, he apprehended that he would be equally ready to commit any outrage or crime.

It will already have been surmised that Rachel was the person who informed Mr. Bronde of the intimacy subsisting between his niece and

Deveral; but she infused so much exaggeration into her narrative, that he imagined that both parties had been guilty of the greatest indiscretion, and instead of calmly and patiently investigating the affair, he had, after asking a few angry questions of Harriet, hurried away to Deveral's hut, and accused and insulted him in the manner above described. On returning home, and inquiring more minutely into the subject, he found, to his mortification, that he had been sadly imposed upon by Rachel, and more than ever regretted having had recourse to such violent measures. His sister too, though usually quiet and timid, threw aside that character on this occasion, and expressed her resentment at his intemperate conduct, and did not fail to predict that serious consequences would probably result from it. Harriet said nothing, but the ill-repressed dislike of her uncle, which she had long felt, now acquired additional strength, and she trembled lest she herself should next be exposed to the violence of his ungovernable temper. In short, the domestic party were mutually and individually dissatisfied, and a silent

and sullen separation took place early in the evening.

Meanwhile Deveral pursued his way through the forest. For some time after parting from Mr. Bronde, he merely followed the furious impulse of the moment, having no particular plan in view, and hurrying forwards in any direction that happened to present itself; but on becoming a little more tranquil, he seated himself at the foot of a tree, and began to consider what he ought to do. The idea of returning to the farm he utterly rejected, and there remained only two alternatives;—that of leading a wandering life in the woods, and picking up a precarious subsistence wherever he might find it; or at once joining the bush-rangers. The first was too unfeasible to merit consideration, even had he possessed arms and ammunition, and been accustomed to hardship, exposure, and privations. To offer himself as a servant at any neighbouring farm would be to ensure his apprehension and punishment as a runaway convict. He could not starve; he could not lie down on the ground and die; and therefore necessity de-

manded that he should seek protection and assistance from Denby and his associates. "It shall be so!" exclaimed he to himself, kindling with rage as he spoke. "I must have an opportunity of avenging my wrongs, though I become an outlaw to obtain it. What matters it now how or when I terminate my career? My prospects are for ever blasted. I endeavoured, while degraded by servitude, to prove, by a virtuous and obedient line of conduct, that I was not inherently depraved, and that I possessed no qualities in common with the criminal and convict except the name. My character was nevertheless mistaken. My diligence was despised, and my humility subjected me to the greatest of insults. It is enough! Never again will I attempt to conciliate the good opinion of my fellow-creatures. Henceforth I shall seek only to preserve myself from guilt. The bush-rangers will not find me a coadjutor in their depredations or enormities, nor an apparent ally longer than a regard for my own safety may demand."

But Deveral, though he had formed his resolution, found that his difficulties were far from being at an end. He did not know where to

seek Denby, and ran the risk of perishing of hunger before he succeeded in finding out his haunts. He first directed his course towards the ravine where he had formerly encountered the three outlaws, and which he had such good reason to remember; but on arriving there, he neither perceived any light nor heard any human sound, and a careful inspection of the spot satisfied him that the bush-rangers, though they might make it a place of occasional resort, had not chosen it for their head-quarters. The moon was nearly setting, and her light was faint, but Deveral was too much accustomed to traverse the woods to find any difficulty in pursuing a particular course. Besides, there was no undergrowth, and the trees, instead of growing at regular distances from each other, and forming a continuous forest, were distributed in large clumps, the intervening ground being clear of timber, or nearly so. Deveral had heard the chief haunt of the bush-rangers described as being an old mill, which its owner had abandoned in consequence of the failure of the stream upon whose banks it stood. He also had a general idea of the site of the building, and the

neighbouring localities, and therefore proceeded on his way with considerable confidence.

After walking three hours, he began to feel both fatigued and exhausted, which arose perhaps less from the distance which he had travelled than from the agitation of his mind, which had continued with little abatement since the time of his departure from the farm. The ground was also now becoming broken and rocky, and he had eaten nothing since morning. The moon had sunk below the horizon, the wind was rising, and the surrounding clumps of trees had lost all distinctness of outline, and their projecting branches resembled gigantic arms, waving to and fro between heaven and earth, while the mass of their foliage appeared to be dilating into black and frowning hills and eminences.

Deveral was beginning to doubt whether it would be advisable for him to proceed any further till next morning, when he observed a light twinkling among the trees at no great distance. He approached it rapidly and without hesitation, for it was now a matter of indifference to him what or whom he might encounter. On penetrating into a small grove of trees, he discovered

a fire, and three natives seated round it, an old man, and his wife, and a boy. Their grass-thatched hut was erected a little way off, and they were preparing a fish for their evening meal. But on catching a glimpse of Deveral, they started up and fled, concealing themselves amongst the adjoining brushwood, where they remained notwithstanding his endeavours to recal and inspire them with confidence. However, he easily understood the cause of their terror, for the colonists had long waged an exterminating war against the aborigines of the country, and the latter, accustomed to expect hostility and cruel treatment from every European, and possessing neither courage nor weapons adequate to resist their aggressions, had long ceased to attempt any thing of the kind, and generally sought safety in flight.

Deveral perceived that there was no chance of the family returning to the fire while he continued near it; but as in abandoning the spot he should compromise his own safety, he thought it justifiable to retain possession of the advantages which he had thus unexpectedly acquired, though he felt that by doing so he was in some degree

imitating the conduct which his own race usually adopted towards the natives. Taking several burning faggots in one hand, and part of the fish in the other, he carried them to a considerable distance from the hut, and laid them upon the ground, to shew the fugitives that he should be satisfied with a share of their comforts, and then returning to the fire, dressed and supped upon the remainder of the fish, and retiring into the hut, laid himself down to sleep, though not without some fears of being assailed in the course of the night by those whose habitation he had so unceremoniously invaded and occupied. But his fatigue exceeded his sense of danger, and slumber soon rendered him unconscious of either, and he did not awake till the sun was considerably above the horizon.

Refreshed by a night of sound sleep, the wrongs which he had suffered recurred to his mind with increased vividness, and he proceeded on his way with energy and speed, and the nearer he approached the haunt of the bush-rangers, the stronger did his resentment against Mr. Bronde and his desire of vengeance become. His heated fancy suggested a variety of plans

for the future, which a cooler judgment would have pronounced impracticable; and a consideration of his prospects sometimes plunged him into despair, and at other times awakened hopes that he might yet enjoy tranquillity and happiness, though when and where was beyond the power of his imagination to conceive.

An hour's travelling brought him in sight of the ruined mill, which was about twelve miles from Mr. Bronde's farm. The building stood on the side of a small stream, and at that season a tolerable quantity of water flowed in its channel, which he found must be forded before he could reach the house. Having accomplished this, he approached with great caution, and soon discovered that the place had no inhabitants; but there were many appearances which showed that its desertion was intended to be temporary. In the lower part of the building he observed a cask of flour, two muskets, a quantity of wearing apparel, and a range of pallets filled with dried grass, which apparently served as sleeping places. A trap stair conducted him to an upper apartment, containing a clumsy table, two rude benches, and a few of the most

essential cooking utensils, besides several lanterns, chests, and other articles of convenience. Having minutely examined every part of the interior of the premises, he walked round them outside, and being satisfied that none of their usual inmates were near, he seated himself under a large spreading tree, proposing there to await their arrival.

The atmosphere was deliciously transparent, soft, and cool, and the heavens were chequered by fleeces of white cloud, which tempered the sunbeams without obscuring them. A pure stream sparkled at Deveral's feet, and wound its course between grass banks within whose sinuosities tufts of rushes of a brilliant green found shelter and a congenial soil. A vast expanse of champaign country, diversified with clumps of trees of every imaginable size, height, contour, and form, stretched before him. Flocks of the wild blue pigeon winged their way from one grove to another, sometimes sweeping in fantastic curves round the tops of its loftiest trees, and sometimes tossing themselves playfully in the air, and simultaneously turning their purple and emerald bosoms to the sun, and then suddenly

dropping down amongst the rustling foliage, and totally disappearing. Green paroquets fluttered around the shrubs and saplings, and alighting upon the slender branches disturbed the small brown squirrels reposing there, and made them spring in pairs to the ground, along which they bounded with shrill whistlings, and sought the trunk of some distant tree, and ascended it with impetuous velocity. The kangaroo often erected its slender head and shoulders above the high and waving grass, or advanced with successive leaps, alternately rising into the air and disappearing again, in the manner of an albacore gamboling on the surface of the sea. A fresh but irregular breeze prevailed, which sometimes entirely ceased for a short interval. Its recommencement at a great distance would then be shewn by the waving of the most remote groupes of trees, by the gradual extension of the impulse from one grove to another, and by the increasing sonorousness of the accompanying sound, while at the same time the mighty shadow of some progressing cloud would darken different parts of the scene successively, and temporarily suspend by its sombre influence, the notes of the

birds, and the vivacity and playfulness of those animals whose domain it happened to over-canopy in its course.

The effects of this scene upon Deveral's mind were tranquillizing and salutary. The violence of his emotions subsided, and he found himself able calmly to review the past, and dispassionately to consider the circumstances in which he was now placed. While, on the one hand, he almost regretted that he had so precipitately left the service of Mr. Bronde, on the other, his original dislike at the idea of associating himself with the bush-rangers acquired strength, and he feared that they would not allow him to remain with them in a neutral character even for a short time. He now felt no desire to revenge himself upon Mr. Bronde in the manner that he had at first intended, and it seemed to him that there was something mean and unmanly in leaguing with a set of desperate ruffians for the purpose of injuring and punishing one individual, who, however brutally he had behaved in a particular instance, was not a wicked or obnoxious character in the main. But these reflections did not in the least degree dispose him to return to the farm, for he perceived

that his doing so would be construed by Mr. Bronde into a tacit request for pardon, and a disposition to forget past injuries and to submit patiently to the infliction of new ones. He therefore came to the resolution of remaining where he was, until he could ascertain whether the bush-rangers would be inclined to afford him refuge and shelter, without exacting from him a compliance with their habits and predatory mode of life.

Deveral passed the day in undisturbed solitude; but at a late hour in the afternoon two men came towards the building in a direction which permitted him to see them before they discovered him. They seemed better dressed and less repulsive in appearance than Denby and his companions were when Deveral met them in the ravine; and he approached the strangers with an air of confidence, and inquired when the former was expected home. They did not immediately return any answer, but surveyed him minutely for some time. Five other individuals now joined the party, and amongst them Deveral recognized Denby, who, he found, had not forgotten him, for he came up to him with a loud

laugh, saying, "As I live, here is our old acquaintance, the man of honour. Yes, the very man whom Terrell was so villainous as to wound in the shoulder with his cutlass. Now, lads, you recollect my last words on that occasion. Did I not say that this here piece of gentility would join our band ere long?"

The surrounding bush-rangers looked on wonderingly, and on Deveral's requesting Denby to allow him a few moments' private conversation, they reluctantly withdrew to a short distance.

"I hope the confidence which I have reposed in you," said Deveral, "will not be misplaced. I seek shelter and protection amongst you. I have been injured and insulted by my master, and have quitted his service of my own accord."

"All this is very well," returned Denby, "and as we are always glad of recruits, you may consider yourself welcome."

"Let us not mistake each other," said Deveral. "I came not to join your band, or to adopt your mode of life. I should make a miserable and an useless bush-ranger. My former habits have rendered me averse from a profession of the kind."

"In the name of all the jails and judges," cried Denby, "what do you mean? You talk as if you had been tapping the brandy cask inside the house yonder. You must come here either as a friend or a foe. If the first, you cannot do otherwise than be one of us in every thing; if the last, you will find that we are not to be cajoled by fine words. What do you really want?"

"Nothing but a place of refuge for the present," replied Deveral. "When I have decided what I am henceforth to do, I shall leave you as I found you. I cannot live alone in the forest; but I would rather perish than return to Mr. Bronde's service. I had no resource but to come here, and have done so in the confident expectation of being well treated by yourself and your companions."

"Hark ye, young fellow," cried Denby, "I am afraid you have got into a scrape which you will not find it very easy to get out of. Your having come amongst us in this open way shews, at least, that you are more fool than rogue; but I must tell you that you will find yourself sadly mistaken if you expect to be allowed to live here

at your ease, and without taking part in our toils and dangers. Indeed, a fellow of any spirit, and you appear to have some, would be ashamed of such a thing; and were I ever so willing to oblige you, depend upon it my companions would not submit to your loitering about this place in idleness. With us it is, no play, no pay. It is a pity that you did not lose the road while travelling here this morning; and if you have not yet made up your mind to steal, plunder, and fight at all hours and seasons, I should recommend your now taking yourself off as fast as your legs can carry you, though I think it not unlikely that on starting, our friends would despatch a few pistol bullets to keep you company and shew you the way."

Denby now joined his companions, leaving Deveral overcome with perplexity, and ashamed of the mixture of passion and adventurous folly which had induced him to seek the haunts of the bush-rangers, under the impression that they would treat him with respect and hospitality, and permit him to avoid their vices, and tacitly condemn their habits, while living amongst them. But he had little time for reflections of this

kind, for the whole band having been made acquainted with his history and his purposes, by Denby, approached and surrounded him with suspicious murmurs. He was at once subjected to the minutest scrutiny, and to remarks and questions of the coarsest and most insulting kind. The bush-rangers debated amongst themselves what he had been, how he had contrived to discover their principal haunt, and whether his intentions were treacherous or honest, and at length most of the party came to the conclusion that he was a very despicable sort of person.

Deveral was not of a temper to endure patiently the taunts and the contempt of any class of people, whether inferior or superior to himself, and the remarks of the bush-rangers, combined with their degrading suspicions, incensed him in the highest degree, and rendered him reckless and desperate. Stepping amongst them, he cried, "Which of you knows who I am, or what I am? Be assured that though I have come here an unfriended stranger, I will not be insulted by any one. I do not join you for the purpose of being your slave, but your companion. I am still my own master, and will conti-

nue to be so as long as I have life. I fear no one. Accept of me or reject me as you please. It is out of your power to confer any obligation upon me, or to do me any material injury."

These words appeared to produce some impression upon his assailants, who gradually retired, and left him alone, though he could easily perceive that they still narrowly watched his movements. However, most of them went into the building, and he imagined that he occasionally heard his name pronounced by them, and that their boisterous merriment was at his expense. One of the party had kindled a fire a little way off, and was busily engaged in cooking the evening meal, to which, when ready, Deveral was invited by Denby, who at the same time conducted him to the upper apartment, where a table had been laid in the coarsest style. In the bill of fare, quantity had been more considered than quality; however, all the bush-rangers sat down to the repast with high relish, and as they had abundance of brandy at their command, they drank freely, and soon became noisy and talkative. Deveral, on the contrary, was abstemious, and his temperance did not attract the

notice of any one for a considerable time; but at length the person who sat next to him remarked it, and called the attention of his associates to the circumstance. "This fellow", said he, "seems inclined to work to windward of us. I don't like your cautious, cool-headed boys that won't drink and riot; their quietness is a snare for the jovial and open-hearted."

"Keep yourself easy," replied Denby; "there are no such here. I 'll vouch for this young man's honour. You don't know him yet; you 'll have a better notion of what he really is to-morrow morning."

The bush-ranger apparently was satisfied, and Deveral remained unmolested during the rest of the evening. He continued at table a considerable time, and found the party much less coarse and ferocious in manners than he had anticipated. Their conversation referred chiefly to the nature of the surrounding country, the kinds of game which it produced, and the character and condition of the neighbouring settlers. They seemed to avoid making any allusion to their peculiar mode of life, or to the circumstances which had reduced them to it, and were upon the best terms

with each other, and shewed no disposition to jealousy or quarrelling among themselves.

About nine in the evening every one prepared for sleep. Deveral was directed to make his bed in the upper apartment, probably because they suspected that he might entertain the design of going off in the course of the night. But he actually had no idea of the kind, and the fatigues of the day rendered his couch of dry grass so acceptable, that he was the last to awake next morning.

Breakfast was served in much the same style as the supper of the preceding night, and during the meal, Deveral listened with intense anxiety to every thing that was said, in order if possible to discover what the bush-rangers intended doing that day. But no particular allusion was made to the subject, and they soon separated, and began to employ themselves in the way that best suited their respective tastes and inclinations. One commenced fishing in the stream already mentioned; another took his gun, and went out in search of game; a third made snares to entrap the kangaroo; while several seated themselves amongst the neighbouring trees, and loi-

tered away the time in talking and looking around them. These tranquil appearances in some degree reconciled Deveral to his situation, and he found it difficult to believe that individuals capable of enjoying such innocent and cheerful recreations could have been guilty of the outrages and atrocities which he had often heard ascribed to them.

CHAPTER IV.

For three days the bush-rangers continued stationary, passing their time nearly in the way already described. Deveral soon became a favourite with most of them, and all suspicions respecting his motives in visiting their haunt, were discarded. Though the manners and opinions of his new companions scarcely accorded with his own, he was never disgusted by those displays of coarseness and profligacy which might have been expected to occur frequently amongst persons in their circumstances. On the contrary, they affected a style of gentleman-like ease and independence; and though their attempts to support this were often ludicrous, and always unsuccessful, still these exerted a restraining influence upon their actions and general behaviour, and at least veiled those deficiencies and barbarisms which they could not entirely correct or conceal.

Deveral, although he felt that his situation was of a very equivocal kind, and that his prospects were as gloomy as possible, did not pass his time without enjoyment. In his early years he had practised all kinds of field sports with enthusiasm, nor had his residence in London, and his subsequent difficulties and misfortunes, destroyed his relish for them. He now borrowed a fowling-piece from Denby, and ranged through the neighbouring woods, less, however, for the sake of shooting, than to experience that feeling of individual power and capability, and that sense of uncontrolled enjoyment, which animate and inspire the solitary sportsman. The forests of New South Wales offer no obstructions to the pedestrian, except where the ground is marshy and favourable to the growth of underwood, or long grass; and the division of the trees into groves and clumps, causes an alternation of shaded and of open surface, producing an agreeable and spirited variety. Deveral found so much pleasure in traversing a country of this kind, that he often separated himself from the bush-rangers for hours together, and wandered to a great distance, almost forgetting that he

carried a gun, or at least so seldom employing it, and with so little effect, that his companions, on his returning home without any game, would pass many jokes upon his unskilfulness in the use of powder and shot.

During these excursions he would abandon himself entirely to the impulses of his imagination, and this was what made him enjoy them so highly, for at no other times could he prevent the intrusion of disagreeable ideas, or lose the consciousness of his being a convict and an outcast. The trees, the birds, the animals, and the plants, which met his eye in the course of his walks, reminded him of nothing of the kind; but when he came in sight of the old mill, and saw the bush-rangers in its vicinity, his spirit would sink to the lowest pitch of depression, and his fancy, formerly so vigorous, drop its wings and cower down, feeble and actionless.

On the evening of the fourth day, one of the party, named Terrell, who had been absent for a considerable time, returned, bringing intelligence which put his companions upon the alert, and made them prepare for an expedition. It was not till supper that Deveral was let into the

secret by Denby's announcing to the assembled company, that he had received information that a quantity of stores of different kinds, were then on their way to Mr. Bronde's farm, and that the person conveying them would arrive there that same evening. "Now, my lads," continued he, "since it is too late to think of intercepting those articles, what suppose we pay a visit to the house of their owner, and select such as we require? I have to-day been examining into the victualling department, and find that the supplies are very low. A little flour will be particularly acceptable, and also a keg or two of brandy. We want gunpowder too, and in taking that we do ourselves a double service; first, in obtaining the means of killing game; and secondly, in depriving the farmers of the means of killing the legal surveyors of woods and forests—us bush-rangers."

This proposal was received with general approbation, and all eyes were immediately turned upon Deveral, who endeavoured to appear both tranquil and indifferent, though he actually was far from being either. "You must be our guide," said Terrell to him, "and you will have a fine

chance of taking revenge upon your old master; but recollect one thing, there is to be no killing. We would not injure our reputation and respectability by committing murder, besides the cruelty of the thing."

"I thank you for your caution, my friend," returned Deveral, "but it is unnecessary. By robbing Mr. Bronde, we shall punish him sufficiently. I am not revengeful. I can forget an injury."

"By Heavens I know that," cried Terrell, laughing, and slapping Deveral on the shoulder where he formerly had wounded him, and looking curiously in his face.

At first, Denby proposed that they should set out on the expedition that same night; but when it was found that at least two hours would be required for preparation, and that they would not arrive at the farm till dawn next morning, he agreed to defer moving till the middle of the following day, which would bring them to the desired spot about an hour after dark, when the attack might be made with greater certainty and security. This being arranged, the party separated for the night, and all of them went to

sleep except Deveral, whose agitation and perplexity at the aspect which things had assumed, prevented his having any idea of taking repose.

To accompany the bush-rangers, and to remain a spectator of the events which might follow, seemed his only course, until he had reflected some time upon the subject. The uncertain extent to which their depredations might be carried, the chance of their being irritated by resistance, and led to commit acts of violence, and the terror which Harriet and her aunt would suffer during the attack of the farm, and the privations they probably would be exposed to after it had been plundered, were considerations which presented themselves forcibly to his mind; and he felt it incumbent upon him to prevent or lighten such evils as far as possible. Besides, it struck him that the family, on seeing him among the bush-rangers, would immediately suppose that he had solicited their assistance to revenge the treatment which he had received from Mr. Bronde,—an idea revolting to his mind, alike, because it was not founded on truth, and because its reception would lead Harriet to attribute to him an ig-

nobleness of spirit, from which he felt himself wholly exempt.

He now decided upon going secretly to Mr. Bronde's farm, and giving its residents intimation of the intended attack of the bush-rangers, after which he should return to his companions, from whom he hoped to be successful in concealing the whole transaction. The execution of his design, dangerous as it was, did not admit of a moment's delay. However, he waited till every one appeared to be asleep, and then taking a fowling-piece and a pistol, and a small quantity of ammunition, he sallied out with as little noise as possible, and hurried into the woods in the direction of his route. Here he deposited the fowling-piece under a fallen tree, intending to resume it again on his return, and thus make the bush-rangers suppose that he had gone out early in the morning in pursuit of game. The pistol he retained for self defence in case of extremity.

When he set out, the night was starry, but dark, and he travelled at a comparatively slow rate; but after an hour, the moon rose, and enabled him to proceed at a pace consistent with the urgency of his purpose. Though his resolution

never wavered for a moment, he did not feel altogether self satisfied, when he considered that he was acting treacherously towards the bush-rangers, who had treated him with kindness and hospitality, though he easily perceived that the injury which might arise to them from the failure of their plan, would be infinitely less than what Harriet and Miss Bronde would suffer, in the event of its success; and therefore he conceived himself fully authorized to effect a great good at the expense of a small evil.

It was about one in the morning when Deveral came in sight of Mr. Bronde's farm. The moon shone with brightness, and the dwelling-house was distinctly visible, though there was no light in any of its windows. He approached in rear of the garden, and observed with interest his hut and various surrounding objects, which a long residence upon the spot had rendered familiar to him. The utmost silence prevailed everywhere, and he felt somewhat at a loss how to effect his purpose without alarming the whole family. An interview with Harriet was what he ardently desired, both that he might see her once more, and that he might have the pleasure of proving to

her, by his intended communication, how sincere an interest he took in her safety and welfare. To knock at her window might seem the height of presumption, and to await the chance of her voluntarily and accidentally opening it, would be absurd in a case of such an emergency.

Crouching on his hands and knees, he approached the corner of the house in which her apartment was situated, and taking a small pebble from the ground, gently struck one of the panes of glass with it. This he repeated several times, after which he heard some one moving within, and presently a white figure came to the window and looked out in a hesitating manner. It was Harriet. She appeared at once to recognize him, and gently raised the sash, saying, "Mr. Deveral, is it you? Where have you been all this time? Why do you come here at this extraordinary hour?"

"I dare not now enter into any explanations that are not connected with the immediate purpose of my visit," replied Deveral. "I have travelled many miles through the woods to warn you that the bush-rangers intend to plunder the farm this evening."

"Your words are terrifying," exclaimed Harriet, "for I know that you must be assured of the truth of what you say. But how did you learn this? Ah! now I perceive;" continued she, in a tone of disappointment, "you have joined these plunderers! you have become an outlaw! Alas, I did not expect this. It is unworthy of you. How could you fall so low?"

"Believe me," cried Deveral, "you are utterly mistaken. I have not permanently associated myself with the bush-rangers. I have merely seen them and learned their plans, which I now betray to you at the risk of my life. I claim no merit in doing so. But I am anxious to declare that it is for your sake alone that I have undertaken such a perilous journey. To me the fate of Mr. Bronde is a matter of indifference, or rather contempt, though to save you from danger or alarm I willingly would sacrifice my life. While others maltreated, despised, and insulted a heart devoted to every generous feeling, you exercised towards it a benevolent confidence, and viewed its possessor with kindness and compassion. I now offer a tribute of gratitude for all this. Let me entreat you, if possible, to remove

from the farm before the bush-rangers make their appearance. Though neither brutal nor inhuman, they may be led to commit excesses which you would shudder to witness. Above all things, warn your uncle not to make any resistance. You and Miss Bronde will do well to conceal yourselves somewhere in the neighbourhood early in the evening. Farewell now; perhaps we never shall see each other again."

Harriet's tears now flowed freely, nor did she try to restrain them; and she several times attempted to address Deveral, but her utterance failed.

"Alas," said she at length, "I fear that your generous anxiety about my fate, renders you forgetful of yourself. What is now to become of you? Where can you go? If it will afford you any pleasure, to know that I entertain a deep sense of the purity of your character, and the honourableness of your nature, you may rest assured of the strength and stability of my conviction on these points. But I fear that you would not be disposed to accede to any plan which it is in my power to suggest for your personal benefit. Were

your pretensions as humble as your condition now is, I might find it easy to assist you in various ways, but your character and qualifications demand that you should be the architect of your own fortune, and I ardently hope that you may not long remain a stranger to their elevating influence."

Deveral remained silent and motionless. The blandness of Harriet's utterance, the soothing purport of her words, the melancholy expression of voice and countenance that had accompanied their delivery, and the moonlight repose of the surrounding solitude, agitated him powerfully and strangely. She leaned against the wall also without speaking. Her tears had ceased to flow, but her features exhibited that softness of outline, and that deep and abstracted tranquillity, which form the most refined and touching indications of sorrow, that the female face can display. Deveral became insensible to every thing except her presence, and was about to tell her how much he loved her, regardless of the consequences that might follow, when he heard a door open on the opposite side of the house. Harriet

at the same moment started, and waving him away with her hand, hastily, but cautiously, shut the window.

He reluctantly obeyed her wishes, and quickly retired, making a small circuit to avoid observation, but in this he was unfortunate, for when about to strike off into the woods, Mr. Bronde suddenly came round one corner of the house, and without recognizing him, called upon him to stand. Deveral, though annoyed at this rencounter, would not degrade himself by taking flight, and he therefore stopped, and awaited Mr. Bronde's approach. "Ha!" cried the latter, on discovering who was before him, "I thought I should see you here again. Are you already tired of liberty? With what intent do you come at this hour? As a robber I suppose."

"No," answered Deveral; "my purpose is a generous one, and has already been executed. I have come here to return good for evil, not for your sake, but out of regard to the female part of the family. I have made a communication to Miss Hasmere, which you will do well to attend to. I shall now bid you good morning."

"Stop at your peril," cried Mr. Bronde; "I

am not to be satisfied with such a vague explanation. Recollect that you are now an outlaw, and that your words and actions are alike unworthy of confidence. Tell me explicitly what has brought you to my farm in the middle of the night. Do not attempt to escape. Your memory must surely inform you which of us two has the strongest arm."

Deveral drew forth his pistol, saying, "When I determined upon coming here, I provided this to protect myself from a repetition of your brutality, should I be so unfortunate as to meet you. *I* now command you to remain, and to listen to what I have to communicate. The bush-rangers will plunder your house to-night. I advise you to make no resistance, but to remove your sister and niece before sunset. As for yourself, you may either go or stay."

"Wretched subterfuge!" exclaimed Mr. Bronde; "how credulous you must take me to be. Is it likely that you, who no doubt both fear and detest me, should come for the sole purpose of putting me on my guard against the bush-rangers, whom you would, I dare say, re-

joice to see attacking and plundering me at this moment. Your story is too gross to merit the slightest attention. I have always suspected that your former rencounter with those outlaws had no foundation in truth."

"I can easily imagine," returned Deveral, with bitterness, "that a mind so base as yours, finds some difficulty in understanding how any one should voluntarily do a generous action. Nothing better proves the coarseness of your ideas, than your charitable supposition that the destruction of your property would afford me pleasure, because you have injured and insulted me. The revenge, which I shall perhaps seek at some future time, will not be of so vulgar a character."

"Do you threaten me again?" cried Mr. Bronde; "but I am not yet alarmed. Do you recollect the words which you used immediately before fleeing from my service? They have as yet produced nothing. But I firmly believe, that you have come here this night with some revengeful intention, which you have not had courage to execute, and now you wish to blind me into the belief that your errand is one of

charity, in order that I may permit you to escape without examination or punishment."

"Were my character what you obstinately persist in supposing it to be," replied Deveral, "you would have no reason to talk in such a manner, for long ere this, I should have retaliated upon you, by stealing or poisoning your cattle, burning your house, or at once putting an end to your insolence and stupidity by means of a pistol-ball; but measures of so ferocious a kind are repugnant to my disposition, and you are, perhaps, right in considering yourself secure for the present. But do not attempt to prevent my departure, lest you should find that my forbearance has limits which it is dangerous to encroach upon. You say that you give no credit to my assertion, respecting the intended attack of the bush-rangers. So be it. I shall not repeat my warning, and only hope that you, and you alone, may suffer to my heart's content for disregarding it, and doubting my veracity."

Deveral now walked away carelessly, nor did Mr. Bronde endeavour to stop him. When he had got out of view, he quickened his pace, and pursued a direct course to the bush-rangers'

dwelling. After his interview with Harriet, he had felt irresolute whether or not he should rejoin Denby and his companions; for he perceived that she disapproved of his having had any intercourse with them, and was disposed to encourage him to seek a melioration of his fortunes, by exercising patience, and persevering in correct and honourable conduct. But his subsequent conversation with Mr. Bronde had changed the current of his feelings, and excited a high degree of irritation and resentment. The doubts of his veracity, and the rooted belief in the criminality of his purposes, which the latter had evinced, combined with his taunts upon the futility of his threats of vengeance, were calculated to awaken, in all its force, that indignation against Mr. Bronde, which had lain nearly dormant for several days past. A consideration of his destitute condition, and of the difficulty, or even impossibility of his anywhere obtaining the means of subsistence, fanned the flame, and he dashed through the forest, cursing his fate, inveighing against the injustice of mankind, and anticipating, with a sort of reckless and malicious satisfaction, the desperate career which the finger

of destiny now, to all appearance, pointed out for him to follow.

The intensity of Deveral's feeling rendered him insensible of the rapidity of his progress, and he reached the abode of the bush-rangers much sooner than he had expected, but not without having taken up the fowling-piece deposited by him in the neighbourhood the preceding evening. However, this precaution to save appearances proved unnecessary; for, on reaching the house, he found all its inmates sound asleep, and immediately lay down upon a vacant bed, and followed their example, gratified that his arrival had not attracted the observation of any one.

Meanwhile Harriet, who had not observed Deveral's interview with her uncle, her windows not commanding a view of the spot where they had met, aroused the latter at dawn, and with considerable embarrassment, communicated the intelligence respecting the bush-rangers, which she had received in the middle of the night. Mr. Bronde, after expressing his astonishment at Deveral's insolence in disturbing her at such a time, treated his story as a fable, and refused

to employ any means for the defence of the farm, or even to allow her or his sister to quit it in the evening. Convinced that Deveral's object in making his nocturnal visit was plunder, or the execution of some scheme of revenge, Mr. Bronde inquired anxiously if any article was missing, and examined the exterior of the house and all the out-buildings, fearful lest combustible materials should be found deposited under their walls or roofs. Satisfied that he neither had been robbed, nor was likely to fall a victim to the machinations of an incendiary, he coolly engaged in his usual occupations upon the farm, leaving Harriet and her aunt to make what arrangements they pleased for the reception of the bush-rangers. The two ladies placed implicit confidence in Deveral's assertion, and continued in a state of painful trepidation and anxiety the whole day. They had, at an early hour, made up their minds to brave the anticipated attack by remaining at home, but this determination was the result of necessity, rather than of courage, there being no house in the neighbourhood where they could obtain a temporary asylum; and were they to take refuge in the forest, they would stand a

chance of falling in with the very people whom they so much wished to avoid.

It was about noon when the whole of the bush-rangers, with Deveral amongst them, set out on their expedition. Every individual was well armed, but apparently more for the purpose of killing game, than in the expectation of requiring their weapons for attack or self-defence. All excepting Deveral enjoyed the highest spirits, and they seemed to consider the excursion one of pleasure rather than of danger or fatigue. Almost every bird that flew past received the fire of several pistols; every tree or shrub bearing fruit was rifled of it, and every kangaroo or emu that ventured to raise its head above the level of the grass, drew upon itself four or five assailants and pursuers.

However, on getting within a mile of Mr. Bronde's farm, they subdued their sporting propensities, and proceeded in comparative order and quietness. Deveral now took an opportunity of asking Denby what they intended to do when they reached the house, should no resistance be offered to their approach. "Why, in that case," replied he, "we shall neither molest nor maltreat

any one, but merely take what we want, and perhaps hardly so much; when we are well used and politely received, we behave like gentlemen. Violence and fighting are as unpleasant to us as to other people, and we never resort to either, provided we can obtain a subsistence without them. I am much mistaken if you will hear a flint snap to-day.—Can stand fire though, I hope?"

"My apprehensions have no reference to myself," replied Deveral. "There are two ladies in Mr. Bronde's house; surely no one will annoy or insult them?"

"Not while I am present," answered Denby. "No, nor at any other time. I am sure there is not a man in this party that would do anything of the kind."

It was sunset when the bush-rangers emerged from the trees behind Mr. Bronde's garden, but they were not observed by any one till they had advanced within fifty yards of the house. Rachel then gave the alarm, and immediately ran towards her master, who was walking in a field a little way off. Meanwhile, Harriet and her aunt made their appearance at one of the upper windows, and

Denby and several of his companions on seeing them, took off their hats in a respectful manner, and then remained standing still and leaning upon their guns. Deveral had not resolution to raise his eyes towards the two ladies, and he turned his back to the house, after receiving proof that they already had recognized him, as indeed they could hardly fail to do; for though the sun had set, the light was still strong. He would now gladly have exchanged his situation for one of danger and resistance, and the noise of fire-arms and the tumult of fighting would have been pleasing to his ear, compared with the expectant silence that now prevailed, and made him feel as if a thousand eyes were fixed upon him with an expression of condemning surprise. He had been led to hope that the bush-rangers, from their loitering so much on the way, would not reach their destination till the darkness had become so great as to render it possible that he might escape the notice of any of the family; but all prospect of the kind was now at an end, and it only remained for him to brave the gaze of individuals, whose looks were nearly insupportable under such circumstances.

Whatever astonishment Mr. Bronde might have felt on being informed that the bush-rangers were actually come, he found sufficient time, while hastening towards them, to conceal any appearance of the kind, and also to decide how he was to receive their visit. They still remained in a groupe within a few yards of the house, and advancing with a fearless and cheerful air he thus addressed them.

"Gentlemen, though I learnt last night that you proposed coming here, and though I have been expecting you all day, you will observe that I have made no preparations for defending my property; neither have I concealed or carried away any part of it, as is a common practice among the farmers, when they anticipate a call from persons of your class. On the contrary; I now throw myself entirely upon your honour and generosity. Take what you please, but let me entreat you to be moderate in your exactions, for you may see that I am far from being a rich man. There are females in the house, and I do not wish to alarm them. If, therefore, one only of your party will attend me to the store-room, the articles you may particularly require shall be de-

livered to him, provided I have such in my possession."

The reply of the bush-rangers was expressed by three shouts of approbation, and Denby immediately accompanied Mr. Bronde into the house, to point out what things would be most acceptable to himself and his friends. Deveral remained outside amongst the others, and viewed Mr. Bronde's presence of mind, and the benefit which he was likely to derive from it, with that sort of angry and reluctant admiration, which people often feel towards those who have artfully and successfully outwitted them. He saw that Mr. Bronde had been enabled to appease and conciliate the bush-rangers, by making an engine of that very information which he had received from himself the preceding evening, and which he had then treated with such insulting disbelief and contempt; and he suffered a gnawing irritation at having become as it were a tool for the convenience of one, who, he knew, would think it a degradation to be obliged to acknowledge that he ever had been benefited by him in one way or another.

Denby soon appeared rolling a small cask

through the doorway, and calling one of the party to assist him. Several other articles were brought out in the same manner, and being placed in front of the house, Mr. Bronde asked the bush-rangers if they wanted anything more. A general negative was the answer, and they immediately proceeded to secure their unextorted plunder preparatory to carrying it off. While this was going on, Denby inquired of Mr. Bronde who had informed him that they intended to visit his farm.

"One of your own party," replied the latter. "He is now amongst you. Beware of him!"

"What, one of ourselves!" exclaimed several voices. "Who is the traitor?" and all eyes were immediately turned upon Deveral. "Speak! answer!" continued they, addressing him, "did you come here last night?"

"I was here last night," answered he, calmly.

"Young man," said Denby, regarding him sternly, "I believe I told you not an hour ago, that you had little chance of hearing a flint snap to-day. I regret that it will not be so, and that

the powder and ball is likely to be expended against yourself."

"Yes, yes," cried the bush-rangers, "let us despatch him at once. We all are loaded, and he deserves no mercy."

"No," cried Denby; "but we may first hear what he has to say for himself." However, the others closed round Deveral, and protested against any indulgence being shewn him, and Denby seemed inclined to agree with them, and retired a few steps, leaving him in their hands.

"Depart hence!" exclaimed Mr. Bronde. "Depart, gentlemen, I entreat you. When I told you that there were two females in this house, did you not tacitly promise to respect their feelings by abstaining from any kind of outrage? Whatever punishment you intend to inflict upon your prisoner, let it not be executed here. Had I suspected that you would make his life a forfeit for his treachery, I should not have exposed it on any consideration, even in the indirect manner that I did. Be merciful! Spare him! He once was my servant."

At this moment, Deveral sprang from amongst

the assembled bush-rangers, and rushed towards the forest. The action was so instantaneous, that none of them had time even to attempt to seize or stop him, and he was nearly twenty yards off before they were in a manner aware of his flight. He continued his course without looking behind him, but in a few moments several pistols were discharged, the balls of which whizzed past him with that malignant querulousness of sound, which, when distinctly heard by him against whom the fire is directed, is more agitating than the noise of a volley of musketry under similar circumstances would be, because in the former case the danger has a degree of singleness and individuality, which renders the sense of it proportionably vivid and defined. Deveral soon got within the shelter of some low trees and a shrubbery, where he considered himself tolerably safe, though several succeeding shots rattled among their branches. However, he pushed on with undiminished speed, encouraged by the idea that his knowledge of the localities of the immediate neighbourhood surpassed that of the bush-rangers, whom he believed he could out-manœuvre, even supposing that they were in active

pursuit of him: but the surrounding stillness soon banished all idea of the kind, and having travelled about two miles, he halted upon a piece of rocky ground, and stretched himself full length among the stones quite exhausted. His journey to and from Mr. Bronde's farm the preceding night, his subsequent return there with the bush-rangers, the continued agitation of his mind during the past day, and lastly, his speedy flight to the spot where he now was, sufficiently accounted for his excessive fatigue.

Fortunately he had never lost hold of his fowling-piece, nor dropped his ammunition, but though gratified by this circumstance, he did not think it advisable to use either that night, lest, by shooting game or making a fire, he might attract the attention of Denby and his friends, or of some other person equally hostile to him. The air was rather cold, and he felt both hunger and thirst, but in other respects was very much at ease. He had of late suffered so many vicissitudes, both mental and corporeal, and was now in every sense of the word so utterly destitute, and so completely disunited from all the relations of social life, that he had no

fear of any thing that could henceforth befal him, and instead of yielding to sorrow and despondency, he experienced a degree of pleasing curiosity to know what the character of his future fate was likely to be. It is true that certain recollections and causes of resentment would sometimes rise in his mind, and agitate him strongly, but instead of dwelling upon these, he did every thing in his power to suppress and banish them, and endeavoured to consider that night as the commencement of a new and detached era in his existence. He discovered a convenient little recess between two large rocks, and having strewn it with abundance of dry leaves, he lay down, placing his fowling-piece at his side, and soon dropt asleep.

Deveral, on awaking next morning, found himself lying under the shade of a small acacia tree, whose slender branches were gemmed with drops of transparent gum, which glittered brilliantly in the sunshine. He broke off and ate a quantity of the gum, and on searching a little way on each side, found plenty of the native fruit called *jibbongs*, and also wild raspberries. Having refreshed himself with these products of

the forest, he set out, intending to travel to the banks of a rivulet seven or eight miles distant. Aware of the scarcity of water in the woods of New South Wales, he wished to go where he could always command a supply of it; besides, he knew that the country in the neighbourhood of the rivulet was pleasant and solitary, and abounded with game,—qualities essential to his comfort and security in his present circumstances.

He did not halt till he reached the stream, which was the same that has been described as running close to the bush-rangers' dwelling, from which he now considered himself to be seventeen miles distant in a direct course. He first invigorated his languid frame by bathing, and then shot a large wild duck, and kindling a fire, dressed it, and made a solitary but acceptable meal. At first, his plan was to ascend the rivulet by following its banks nearly to its source, with the view of getting far beyond any European settlement, and living undisturbed upon his own resources. The appearance of the surrounding country rendered this scheme very inviting, for wild fruits and game abounded in every direction, and level plains extended to the

horizon; while the groves with which they were interspersed would afford both fire-wood and shelter. But when he began to consider the subject more in detail, many objections and difficulties presented themselves. He had but a small supply of ammunition; he was without tools of any description; his whole stock of clothes consisted of what he then wore; and he had not sufficient acquaintance with the subordinate particulars of uncivilized life to make him feel confident of being always able to supply, by his own exertions or ingenuity, even those things that would be essential to existence.

After much calm deliberation, he decided upon following a middle course, by joining a party of natives, and living amongst them, at least for a time. He did not forget that they generally were hostile to Europeans, but he imagined that his appearing alone would dispose them to receive him with a degree of kindness and confidence, which his subsequent efforts to please and benefit them would increase and render permanent. In this case, their resources would secure him from absolute want, while he should at the same time be acquiring a know-

ledge of their mode of life and means of obtaining a subsistence, which might prove useful to him in the event of his separating from them.

Where to find a party of the aborigines of the country was now the question; but Deveral knew enough of their habits to perceive that the banks of the rivulet were likely to form a favourite place of resort with them, and he continued to follow its windings, taking care to explore all the recesses and sinuosities on each side, in the hope of discovering some natives fishing. The New Hollanders, having no arms fit for killing animals at a distance, and being indolent in their dispositions, and unwilling to fatigue themselves by pursuing game on foot, rely much on fishing as a means of subsistence, and will rather sit languidly with a hook and line by the side of a stream than engage in hunting the emu or swift kangaroo. Deveral therefore conceived that his fowling-piece would be a great means of conciliating them, so long as his ammunition lasted, by destroying for their use animals and birds which they could not otherwise obtain.

About two hours before sunset, when Deveral

began to have thoughts of seeking a resting-place for the night, he observed a column of smoke rising from the midst of some lofty trees, and a quarter of an hour's walk brought him in sight of an encampment of natives. The spot appeared to have been occupied some time; for instead of those temporary sheds of bark under which the New Hollanders shelter themselves while travelling, there were several arched huts, formed of interwoven twigs, and thatched with grass, the whole height and diameter of the front of each being open, and having a tolerably good fire burning immediately before it. This little settlement stood upon a circular eminence, the surface of which was perfectly free from brushwood or long grass. Trees of great height, vast thickness of stem, and most luxuriant foliage grew upon it, at nearly equal distances from each other, and beneath them the huts above described were scattered, without any regard to regularity, except that none of them were built close together. At the foot of the mound lay the rivulet, expanded, at that place, into a smooth and glassy pond, on the sides of which several natives were employed in different

ways. The horizontal rays of the setting sun darted among the trees, bronzing their rugged and dark coloured trunks, and intersecting the recesses of the grove with golden bands of light, the continuity of which was often broken by the passing flight of the splendidly plumaged rifle-bird, or the oblique leap of the flying squirrel, in its progress from one tree to another. Around the extremities of the highest branches small red-headed parrots were fluttering with noisy vivacity, while high over head flocks of wild turkeys silently winged their way, through the soft and serene air, to their distant and secluded roosting places.

This scene was altogether so new and attractive to Deveral, that he stood contemplating it till roused by the voices of the natives, who had observed him, and were now pointing him out to each other. He advanced not without apprehension, and addressed them in their own language, of which he had acquired a few common expressions. They regarded him with more curiosity than suspicion, and on his telling them that he wished to pass the night in their camp, they consulted together upon the subject, and

at length replied that he had permission to do so. He was about to approach one of their huts, to examine it, when an old man seized his arm, and leading him in a different direction, brought him to an old unthatched dwelling, and, letting him understand that he was at liberty to take possession of it, retired, and joined his companions.

Deveral did not find his reception at all encouraging, and he began to suspect that these people would not easily be induced to allow him to remain amongst them. Desirous to conciliate them by the offer of some game, he looked around for an animal or bird that was likely to prove an acceptable present, and observing a large opossum slowly climbing the trunk of a tree near which a groupe of natives stood, he took aim, and fired. Whether a few stray shot had accidentally struck some of the party, or whether they imagined that he had discharged his fowling-piece at themselves, he did not find time to inquire, for in an instant, a shout was raised by the individuals nearest him, and immediately replied to by others at a distance, while the men at the same time seized their throwing sticks, and

launched a shower of spears towards him. Not being wounded, he turned round to expostulate with them; but at that moment, a number of natives who had been engaged at the side of the river, joined their friends, and without inquiry or deliberation, let fly a second set of spears, one of which wounded Deveral in the left arm. Seeing that there was no hope of coming to an explanation with his assailants, who viewed him with outrageous looks and gestures, he hurried down the eminence on which the village stood, and making a circuit through the adjoining plain, gained the bank of the river about half a mile above the spot whence he had started.

CHAPTER V.

Deveral now stopped to reload his fowling-piece, and to ascertain whether the natives were pursuing him. He distinctly heard their voices, but as the sound did not increase in loudness, he supposed that they still remained in the village, and had no intention to harass him further. He examined his wound, which was neither extensive nor serious in appearance, but he dreaded lest it had been inflicted by a poisoned spear, in which case, his speedy death would, he knew, be inevitable. Dressing the wound as well as his means admitted, he proceeded along the bank of the stream for about a mile further, when reaching a deep and woody recess, he seated himself upon a rock within it, and allowed his feelings to have full play.

"Hail! earth, skies, woods, and waters!" exclaimed he: "you are henceforth to be my only companions. I utterly renounce all future sym-

pathy, intercourse, and communion with my own species. I vow to regard every man as hostile and treacherous in his nature, and I would that the whole of the world were present to hear and record my determination. Three times have I been dashed to the earth by the assailments of accursed suspicion. Three times have my good and honourable purposes been construed into crimes, and three times have I foolishly allowed these injuries and insults to pass unrevenged. The good, the pure minded alone are weak, alone are contemptible. Were I a desperate criminal would I now be here alone? Would Mr. Bronde be alive? Would the bush-rangers think me a traitor or have fired upon me? Would yonder village remain unburnt? Would the native who speared me be likely to see to-morrow's dawn? No, no, no! And what is my reward for this forbearance? Perhaps to die here by poison. These human beasts that have spurned me, are doubtless now enjoying themselves. Yes; fine fires, warm beds, abundance of food, and perhaps wine too. Oh charming, well-governed world! But patience! Is it not for my good that I lie here? Ha! ha! ha! ha!

for my good! To shiver with cold, to feel the pangs of hunger, to remain in darkness, to have my flesh creeping under the influence of a virulent wound, to groan out life, and in my last moments convulsively to spurn the earth from which I have originally sprung."

Deveral gradually became exhausted by the violence of his emotions, and at length dropped asleep. When he awoke, it was nearly dawn; the air was fresh and dewy, and the stars upon the eastern horizon shone with a feeble and declining lustre. The stream rippled tranquilly at his feet, and every thing was motionless and silent on the surrounding plains, except when the ostrich-like emus moved along in troops, or the mountain pheasant, couched among the long grass, raised its varied notes at intervals, in response to the calls of others of its own species. Deveral continued lying on the ground for some time, passively yielding to the beneficent influence of the scene and the season. His perturbation of mind, the preceding night, now appeared to him like a dream, in which the emotions experienced by the sleeper are totally out of proportion to the causes ostensibly producing them.

He viewed the conduct of the natives as a natural result of the hostility which they were accustomed to meet with from his own species. In the shots fired by the bush-rangers he saw nothing but a hatred of treachery, and a due attention to their own safety; and he considered Mr. Bronde's ungenerous treatment of him to have arisen from the violence of his temper, and the coarseness of his perceptions, rather than from any inherent depravity of disposition. The remembrance of Harriet came over his mind like a strain of soothing music, and all thoughts of revenge or retaliation upon those who had wronged him fled, when he imagined the expression of regret and disapproval which would shade her countenance, were she to learn that he was under the influence of such impetuous feelings as had agitated him the preceding night.

When the sun rose, a gentle but steady breeze sprung up also, and swept away a stratum of thin mist, that had lain upon the surface of the surrounding country; the trees rustled harmoniously in the wind; the long grass waved in beautiful undulations; and thousands of birds were in active flight everywhere. "Since I en-

joy such serenity of mind here," thought Deveral, "why should I ever return to the haunts of men, and run the risk of being harassed and degraded as I hitherto have been? If it be truly said that none but the innocent and the generous-hearted can be happy in the solitude of nature, I have some reason for self-complacency. Uncivilized life in this wilderness surely is better than that led by the most favoured and fortunate convict. Were I now to visit any farm or settlement, I should undoubtedly be seized as a runaway criminal, and eventually sent to Sydney, there to undergo some disgraceful punishment. By seeking society I should aggravate my lot, instead of meliorating it. I shall therefore throw myself upon the bounty of nature in this genial climate, and cultivate a more intimate acquaintance with my own mind than I hitherto have had an opportunity of doing."

Deveral having walked about six miles, found it necessary to have recourse to his gun to procure something for breakfast. After the meal, he began to consider whether it would not be better for him to fix his abode where he then was, than to pursue the course of the stream

any further. The neighbouring country was not inhabited either by Europeans or natives, and possessed many important requisites in addition to its beauty and solitariness. His hesitation respecting the most eligible spot for his residence was soon put an end to, for while wandering along with an observant eye, he discovered the frame-work of a native hut. It was situated within a triangular space formed by the natural opposition of the stems of three large trees, which grew about ten feet apart from each other. A sort of fence, or screen, of interwoven twigs, had been extended between their trunks, so as to form a three-sided inclosure, calculated alike to protect and conceal the habitation which it environed. Both the hut and its fence were out of repair, but their most substantial materials still remained, and Deveral perceived that the labour of supplying the deficiencies would be trifling, compared with that requisite for the erection of a new habitation for himself, on even the most comfortless and limited plan. It was evident that no native had resided there for a considerable time, and it seemed unlikely that its former occupants would ever return to it,

though if they did, there was little to fear from the attack of a single family.

Deveral having thus chosen his abode, lost no time in rendering it habitable. He first collected a quantity of the long grass which grew abundantly upon the adjoining plains, and thatched the hut in the way that its constructor had formerly done. While engaged in this, and in other similar occupations, he could not avoid remarking the sensation which his arrival, and the commencement of his labours, was exciting amongst the neighbouring birds and quadrupeds. They probably had not even seen a human being of any kind for many months previous, and the appearance of one preparing to settle in their domain, seemed to astonish and alarm them a good deal. At first the parrots inhabiting the three large trees already mentioned, collected in flocks, with loud screamings, and fluttered from branch to branch, always following Deveral, and keeping him in sight, whichever way his employment led him. Now and then a white-headed eagle would soar in circles above him, and suddenly swooping down, pass close to his face with flapping wings, as if inclined to punish him for

his intrusion. Crows alighted upon the ground in small parties, and alternately approached and retired with an inquisitive insolence, which seemed to demand what had brought him there. Small squirrels placed themselves upon the extremities of the boughs, and timidly and attentively overlooked his labours; and the dark-brown opossum could often be discerned crawling in cautious silence amidst the thickest parts of the foliage, and at short intervals pushing its head through some interstice, and gazing on the scene below. Upon the plain, and a few hundred feet off, several kangaroos sat erect with out-stretched paws and stiffened ears, viewing the operations of the stranger; and in the distance, the sombre-coloured emu, retaining its habitual shyness, reared its long and slender neck to the height of a human being, and formed the most remote, though apparently not the least interested spectator of what was going forward.

Deveral continued his work, undisturbed by the general curiosity which his presence had awakened in the animal world, being well aware that the country contained no wild creatures that had either strength or inclination to injure him.

While clearing the floor of the hut, he found a native fishing-hook and line, which, though of the rudest kind, were a valuable acquisition, not only on account of the use that he might make of them, but because their existence there was a sort of proof that the neighbouring stream had fish in it. He calculated that his ammunition would not suffice to supply him with food longer than one month, even supposing that he used it in killing the largest kind of game only; but now the fishing-line suggested a way of varying and increasing his resources in regard to subsistence, which was very encouraging to a novice in the arts of uncivilized life, such as himself.

It was two days before Deveral had finished every part of his residence, to his satisfaction. While at work, the time passed in a rapid and agreeable manner, and at night he slept serenely, and always cheerfully resumed his labours early the succeeding morning. After having completed his hut, his occupations began to partake more of the character of amusements than of manual labour. He occasionally spent several hours in fishing, sometimes invented and set traps to secure game, or went out shooting when these

failed to yield him a proper supply; and made it a daily business to collect a certain quantity of firewood, for which he had to go a considerable distance, because, having no axe, he could not cut down any trees, but was obliged to be satisfied with the decayed timber that lay scattered upon the ground. The preparation of his meals consumed a considerable portion of his time, and in the evening he strolled along the banks of the river, indulging in such ideas and reflections as casually presented themselves, and observing the habits and manners of the various wild animals that resorted there to obtain water.

He continued this kind of life for three weeks, passing his days in a style of monotonous similarity, which rendered them indistinguishable one from another, except by referring to the different kinds of game which had been killed upon each. Hitherto, the weather, with the exception of a few inconsiderable showers, had been favourable and abounding in sunshine, so that Deveral had spent nearly all his waking hours in the open air, the clearness and serenity of which, conjoined with the pleasing character of the surrounding scenery had cheered his spirits, and produced in

him a buoyancy of mind, which seemed even to himself to be unnatural and inconsistent with his situation.

One morning, on getting up, he found the rain falling in torrents, the rivulet swollen and turbid, and a sullen-looking misty sky overhead. He fortunately had in his hut provisions sufficient for the day; but on examining his fire, which he always made outside of his enclosure, and preserved by covering up the embers during the night, he saw with much uneasiness that it was completely extinguished, the rain having flooded the surrounding surface. Had the weather been fine, it would have cost him little trouble to rekindle the faggots; but everything being now in a humid state, he was at a loss what to do. At length, collecting a quantity of the driest leaves that he could find, he placed them inside of his hut, and endeavoured to make them burn by flashing gunpowder upon them from the pan of his fowling-piece. In this manner, after much delay and many irritating failures, he succeeded in producing a flame. This, by gradual additions of fuel, attained the appearance of a small fire, but gave no heat whatever, and filled the cabin with

clouds of pungent smoke, amidst which Deveral set about preparing his morning repast, with a degree of dissatisfaction and unwillingness such as he had never before experienced upon a similar occasion. When the meal was ready, his appetite failed, and he reflected with contempt and disgust upon the time he had spent and the mental irritation he had undergone, to obtain a gratification so paltry as what was to be then derived from his food.

At noon the rain had not in the least degree abated, and his discontent and depression of mind were on the increase. There was nothing in his hut calculated to yield him the least amusement, and he could not stir out of it even for a moment without being wet through. The air was damp and chilly, and drops of water constantly distilled through the thatch overhead, and fell upon him. His clothes did not afford sufficient warmth, and the smouldering half-stifled fire before which he crouched, added little to his comfort in that way.

"Is this," thought he to himself, "is this a specimen of the life which appeared so attractive when I first embraced it? In coming here, I wished

and hoped to avoid those irritations to which an intercourse with my own species has hitherto so often subjected me. But man, I find, is not the sole tormentor. The elements are now annoying me in all directions, and their influence is so extended, that change of place would not enable me to escape from it. What a wretched cipher am I here! My existence is scarcely palpable even to myself, and were I to die this moment, no living creature would be aware of it. What have I been doing these twenty days past? Nothing! for there is no result. It is true that I have built a hut, made fires, killed game, caught fish, dressed and ate them, and generally, at the conclusion of this routine, dropt asleep, so fatigued that my intellects did not even exert themselves in dreaming. My whole attention has been devoted to keeping myself alive, and after all I have never once enjoyed the pleasure of actually living, which doubtless consists in the exercise of the faculties and feelings, whether such be productive of absolute pain, or of the reverse. Here I have no opportunity of experiencing anger, love, or sorrow, or of causing them in others. Yes! it is better to live a con-

vict, and to be branded, despised, and maltreated, than to linger out existence in such a solitude as this; deprived of the animating influence of human passions, interests, and afflictions, and without any anxieties beyond those for the morrow's subsistence."

In the course of the afternoon the clouds began to break, and Deveral was encouraged to leave his hut and go towards the rivulet, which had now indeed become a very considerable stream. He had scarcely reached its bank when he heard a loud report and explosion, and, on looking towards his hut, saw that it was unroofed, and that its walls were on fire. After his astonishment had a little subsided, he was led to attribute the accident to lightning, though he neither had seen any nor heard thunder during that day. But a moment's reflection served to explain the whole affair. Having in the morning used the pan of his fowling-piece to procure fire, he had negligently left his ammunition bag upon the ground, and some sparks had crept along the dry grass and inflamed the gunpowder.

Deveral hurried back to the spot, and found it impossible to preserve either his habitation or

its inclosure, both of them, excepting the roof of the former, being in a blaze. All his ammunition was destroyed, as likewise were several domestic utensils, the formation of which had cost him much time and labour. His fowling-piece alone remained uninjured, but not having the means of charging it, its value was gone.

Deveral thus found himself deprived of all his resources, at the time when they had become most necessary and important. The rainy season was commencing, and he had no house; the weather was cold, but he was without a fire or the means of making one, and the game, in his immediate neighbourhood was beginning to grow scarce and shy, and he did not possess any of the requisites for killing or catching it. Occupied with these gloomy ideas, he ascended a tree to obtain shelter from the rain, and seated himself on the fork of one of its largest branches. Here he soon came to the resolution of abandoning the woods, and could not but feel astonished that he had ever entertained any idea of living happily or contentedly in their solitude. But though anxious to throw himself into human society at all hazards, this was not a matter of

such easy or certain accomplishment as might have been supposed. The nearest farm that he had any knowledge of was Mr. Bronde's, and it seemed doubtful if he would be disposed to take back into his service one who not only had quitted it without permission, but was likely to seek revenge for past injuries. The manner in which Deveral had parted from the bush-rangers forbade all hope of relief from that quarter, and he had as little reason to expect a good reception from the natives. The rain had already flooded the low parts of the country, and filled the marshes, which would render travelling on foot both fatiguing and dangerous, besides that the thickness of the weather made it difficult to follow, with any degree of exactness, any particular course. However, as Deveral had provisions for only one day, it behoved him to come to some decision before the next morning; and he at length satisfied himself that his most prudent plan would be to proceed down the river, carefully avoiding the native village and the mill, both of which he had such good reason to remember, until he reached the house of a settler, who, he had heard, was located near its mouth,

and about twenty-five miles from the spot where he then was.

Deveral, as may be easily supposed, passed a most comfortless night, for the rain continued without intermission, and the branches overhead afforded a very imperfect shelter; besides, he scarcely dared sleep, lest he should drop from his elevated position to the ground. At dawn he started upon his journey, and though the weather had not changed, he proceeded with rapidity and confidence, aware that the stream would prove an infallible guide to his place of destination. His prospects were of a discouraging character, for he had no doubt that the first European to whom he might address himself would regard him as a runaway convict, and secure him and send him to Sydney; but he did not intend to make the least resistance under any circumstances whatever, because he felt in a manner careless of what might henceforth befall him.

About three hours before sunset, Deveral supposed that he had travelled fifteen miles, and began to look forward to spending another night in a tree. Meanwhile, he seated himself upon the driest spot he could find, and prepared to

make a meal proportioned to the smallness of his supplies. At this moment, he observed a man with a musket lurking among the bushes, not more than a hundred yards from him. The stranger, finding that he was discovered, hallooed twice, and then approached; and presently two other persons, similarly armed, appeared in an opposite direction, and also advanced. Deveral did not move from his seat, and easily perceived that he had been surprised by a party of soldiers, for the three individuals now surrounded him, and seized his fowling-piece.

"It is not loaded," said Deveral; "I know not if you have been in search of me or another person, but it is quite immaterial, as I am ready to attend you without delay."

"You don't look like the man we want, either," replied one of the party, who was a corporal. "What 's your name? Are you a runaway convict?" Deveral having satisfied him on these points, he turned to his comrades, saying, "My lads, is not one prisoner as good as another? This is plaguey weather, and we 've had a weary march of it. I 'm sure we shan't find the fellow we were sent after. I 've a

notion to go back at once to head-quarters. Hark ye," addressing Deveral, "do you know any thing of Michael Jones, or his haunts, though there 's little use in asking, as I dare say you 'll answer no."

Deveral, of course, did so, and afterwards gave the corporal a short history of himself since his arrival in the colony, which the other received with attention and good humour, and then having consulted with his companions, they unanimously agreed that it was advisable to return without delay to Windsor, whence they had been despatched three days before in pursuit of a criminal who had absconded from government employ, and committed several daring robberies.

Deveral and the three soldiers marched two miles further that day, and passed the night in a native hut which they found untenanted. Next evening they arrived at Windsor, and Deveral was put in confinement till the following morning, when he was sent with a guard to Sydney, and lodged in the factory there, till his case should undergo investigation. He was now once more within those walls where he had spent

many miserable hours, on his arrival in the country. All the patience he had exerted, all the forbearance he had practised, and all the hardships he had endured in the intervening time, had produced no favourable, no encouraging result, and his condition was now more uncertain, hopeless, and degraded, than it had been when his punishment was just commencing; and this not in consequence of any recent, or at least, intentional misdeeds of his own. "If I have," exclaimed he, "in the present instance, been the author of my own misery, it has been in a way that carries honour rather than disgrace with it. Had I quietly and slavishly submitted to the insults of Mr. Bronde, I should probably still have been his servant and still subsisting upon his bounty. But, in asserting the rights of human nature, I have suffered the wrongs of fortune. Well, I don't regret my past conduct, and I feel that no future events will break my spirit or make me unduly bend to circumstances."

Next day, he received a message from the superintendant of the factory, desiring his presence in the apartments of the latter. On attend-

ing at the appointed place, the gentleman told him that, in all probability, he would soon be released from confinement, and rendered more independent and comfortable than he had hitherto been, and that the circumstances of his case had been represented to a person in high authority, and viewed in a favourable light. "If you will step into that room," continued the superintendant, "you will see an individual to whom you owe a debt of unceasing gratitude." Deveral opened the door pointed out to him, and entering, found himself next moment in the embrace of his mother.

"Ah, Deveral!" said she, after their mutual emotion had somewhat subsided, "you look ill and emaciated. How much you must have suffered since I last saw you! Have you been well treated here?"

"My dear mother," returned he, "if it has been otherwise, my present happiness will render me forgetful of the past. I am so astonished that I do not know what questions to ask first. Scarcely an hour has elapsed since I was anticipating punishment, instead of a joyful interview, like this. How did you come here? How

could you muster resolution to undertake the voyage?"

"You know not the strength of parental affection," answered Mrs. Hermsdill. "I had other and much more serious difficulties than timidity to overcome. A considerable time elapsed before I could raise funds to pay the expense of a passage to this country; but the chief delay arose from my waiting for an answer to an application which I had made to the secretary of state respecting yourself. The moment I obtained this, I made preparations for the voyage, resolving to be the bearer of the good tidings which it conveyed. In short, I bring an official letter to the governor, desiring him, in consideration of the peculiarity of your case, to *emancipate* you, which means that you are to be set at liberty and permitted to live where you please, provided it be within the bounds of the colony. You are still an exile, but no longer a slave; a criminal, neither myself, nor any other person, ever considered you."

"Blessed intelligence!" exclaimed Deveral. "My mind, relieved of a load of degradation, regains its vigour, and my spirits spring into

buoyancy. Freed from the restraints of servitude, I shall now be able to convince yourself and the world that I am neither vicious nor depraved, and that the errors of my past life have been the result of weakness rather than of wickedness."

"Let the remembrance of such things be dropped for ever," returned Mrs. Hermsdill. "All that now remains to be done is that we should decide where we shall fix our abode. While in England, I recovered a small part of my property, the banker who absconded with it having been seized and forced to refund as much as his means would admit. But there is enough for our support, and your industry, doubtless, will soon increase our resources. Immediately on landing here, I made inquiries respecting you, and was informed that you had been placed in the service of Mr. Brønde, to whom I wrote, enclosing a letter to yourself. Imagine my embarrassment and alarm, when I received a reply, stating, that you had fled from his farm some days before, and that he knew not where you had gone. All my efforts to learn any thing of you were ineffectual, till yesterday evening,

when the superintendant of the factory informed me of your unexpected arrival at Sydney. I do not mean to censure or approve of your quitting Mr. Bronde's service, till you have explained to me what your reasons were for so doing; but I am assured, by good authority, that the affair will be taken no notice of, because you are now emancipated, and therefore let me advise you to dismiss all fears of the kind, and turn your thoughts to more agreeable subjects of contemplation."

After a good deal more conversation upon their future prospects, Mrs. Hermsdill left Deveral, in order to complete the arrangements that were in progress for his liberation from confinement. All these were effected in the course of the day, and in the evening he quitted the factory, and joined his mother in retired but comfortable lodgings, which she had occupied since her arrival in Sydney. They supped together, and talked till a late hour; but after Deveral had gone to his chamber, the novelty and comparative luxury of every thing there prevented him from sleeping. The soft dry bed, the festooned curtains, and the carpeted

floor, presented such a contrast to the humble and, as it were, savage accommodations to which he had for several months past been accustomed, that his attention was for a long time distracted and kept alive by the variety of unusual objects around him. But when he awaked next morning, and saw the sun emerging from the horizon, and recollected that its light no longer warned him to arise and labour for himself or for another, and that the progressing day would be exclusively his own, his pleasure was boundless, and he felt as if time were flying too fast, and carrying along with it enjoyments whose evanescence did not admit of his tasting and duly appreciating them.

It was not long before Deveral received the important and agitating intelligence that Miss Bronde and Harriet were then residents of Sydney. The representations which the former had made to her brother respecting his unjust treatment of Deveral, both before and after the affair of the bush-rangers, had laid the foundation of a quarrel between them, which various circumstances had tended to increase and foment. Miss Bronde lived in daily fear of another attack

from Denby and his party, and continually teased her brother with predictions of the kind, at the same time declaring it to be her firm belief that the moderation which the robbers had evinced had been owing to the previous entreaties and interposition of Deveral in behalf of their family. Harriet's discontent and melancholy also increased, and her uncle and she began to feel a mutual dislike to each other, without very well knowing how to account for it. Discord and petty strife prevailed in the house, and none of the parties were qualified for the office of peace-maker, nor indeed much disposed to undertake a duty of the kind. Miss Bronde at length stated that her niece's health was declining, and that she required change of air, at the same time suggesting that a visit to Sydney would be beneficial, particularly as the wife of one of the merchants there was her friend, and had often requested that she would spend a few months under her roof. Mr. Bronde gave a careless assent to the proposal, and ironically advised his sister to accompany Harriet in the character of her nurse. The former, irritated by the sarcasm implied in this speech, declared her intention of

doing so, and her brother answering that he could manage very well without her, the two ladies lost no time in preparing for their journey, and, after exchanging a cold farewell with Mr. Bronde, set out for Sydney.

Deveral was at a loss how to act with reference to Miss Bronde and Harriet. He was now, it is true, no longer a convict; but still the stigma of having been banished from his native country remained, and could not easily be forgotten either by himself or by others. His mother's arrival in Sydney and his sudden emancipation had excited much interest and attention among the inhabitants of the place, and as, in judging of the guilt or innocence of any individual, people are generally disposed to one extreme or the other, many persons believed Deveral to be almost immaculate, and declared that they were convinced that he had been the victim of false evidence, or of a conspiracy to ruin him, and that he ought at once to be received into society, and treated as a gentleman. It ought to be remarked that Deveral's appearance and manners were calculated to create favourable impressions, while the romantic colour-

ing which his story had received in the course of repeated narrations, rendered these external qualities additionally interesting; and it was easy to discover that he formerly had lived in good society, and had enjoyed an excellent education, and that his recent debasement had not corrupted his mind, or infected him with low or vulgar habits, as would have happened in the case of a person of inferior stamp.

At this time, the European free population of Sydney was divided into two parties, on a subject of much local interest and importance. One side contended that, when a convict's period of banishment had expired, or when he happened to be emancipated in consequence of his guilt being found to be much lighter in its character than had at first been supposed, the circumstances of his past life ought to be forgotten, and that he ought to be received into general society, provided his actions were blameless, and his habits and manners inoffensive and unobjectionable. The other party, termed the *exclusionists*, were violently opposed to this equalizing system, and argued that the distinction between the free and the convict population ought always to

be preserved, however respectable and honourable the conduct of individuals of the latter class occasionally might be.

Deveral's emancipation afforded the liberal party an opportunity of acting up to the principles which they professed, and they gladly embraced it. Mrs. Hermsdill had brought a letter of credit to a merchant who was zealous in the cause, and he lost no time in visiting herself and her son, and inviting them to his house. This, however, was done not less out of compliment to the lady than to Deveral; for every one viewed her with respect and sympathy, and was disposed to shew her kindness, under the idea that she must feel painfully the peculiarity of her situation.

Mr. Carfew, the merchant above mentioned, invited Deveral and his mother to an evening party, which was attended by a considerable number of individuals, most of whom entertaining the same opinions as their host upon the convict question, treated the two strangers with confidence and cordiality. Deveral did not feel much at ease, but his embarrassment changed into agitation, when he saw Miss Bronde and

Harriet enter the room, accompanied by the family with whom they were then residing. Nor did the young lady experience a less degree of emotion on recognizing him; for though she had heard of his mother's arrival, and his subsequent emancipation, she scarcely expected to see him in society at so early a period. He bowed to herself and her aunt, but did not feel disposed to attempt to engage in conversation with either of them, till he had ascertained in what relation they were inclined to view him.

Harriet had always admired Deveral's countenance and deportment; but these were now so much set off by dress and cheerfulness of manner, that it was by his features alone that she was able to identify him with the labourer who had toiled in her uncle's garden, in the garb of a convict. But elegant and attractive as he appeared, the interest with which she regarded him was painful in its character, and she wished a thousand times that he had been any thing but a convict, or at least that she had never seen him in that condition.

Deveral was indulging in reflections of a similar kind; for he now began to entertain the idea

that he might yet gain Harriet's affections, though he hardly admitted this to himself. But in considering how she would be likely to act should he seek her society, it struck him that the remembrance of his having been a public criminal, and also a domestic servant, would effectually steel her heart against his endeavours to inspire a mutual regard, and render her insensible to the value of any good qualities or accomplishments of which he might prove himself to be possessed.

When the party began to break up, Mr. and Mrs. Lenden, the persons with whom Miss Bronde and Harriet were residing, went up to Deveral and his mother, and invited them to spend the following evening with them, which they agreed to do, though the former felt some reluctance in visiting at their house, till he had learned how Harriet was disposed towards him. Mr. Lenden, being one of the liberal party, was anxious to prove this in an unequivocal manner, and he therefore took the earliest opportunity of shewing attention to one whom his opponents would, if possible, have excluded from respect-

able society. Deveral, on returning home, had little pleasure in recalling the events of the last few hours, and wished himself out of Sydney, and quietly settled upon some retired farm in the country. But, as he had accepted Mr. Lenden's invitation, he resolved to call upon him next morning, with a view to satisfy himself whether Harriet was inclined to regard him as her equal; for in the event of her refusing to associate with him, he intended to avoid her presence altogether, and endeavour to banish her image from his mind.

On the succeeding day, Deveral sought Mr. Lenden's residence, with a throbbing heart, and agitated gait. He was received by Mrs. Lenden and Harriet, who sat together at work upon a sofa. The former, coinciding in the opinions of her husband, treated Deveral with politeness and affability, and seemed anxious to make him feel as much at ease as possible, for she erroneously imagined that his disturbed air and manner proceeded from sensitiveness to past events, and distrustful fears respecting his reception in society. After a good deal of conversation, in which he

bore a very subordinate part, Harriet never speaking at all, she left the room, being called away by a servant.

Deveral remained silent for some moments, and his fair companion kept her eyes fixed upon the muslin which she was sewing, or rather affecting to sew. "Miss Hasmere," said he, rising from his chair, "I have for some days past been in a state of painful uncertainty, from which you alone can relieve me. It is necessary that both of us should be sincere. Accuse me not then of presumption, if I seek to know on what terms we are henceforth to be. Many of your friends have acknowledged my claim to a place in respectable society; but their decision is valueless to me, unless it be ratified by yourself. Am I still a criminal in your eyes? Has my past degradation for ever excluded me from having any intercourse with a being so good and so pure as yourself? Say so, and I shall never attempt to see or address you again. I have this morning come to receive my sentence."

"Mr. Hermsdill," returned she timidly and irresolutely, "you do both yourself and me an

injustice, in supposing that I would yield to vulgar prejudices, and deny to your character and good qualities that regard to which they entitle you. I am too inexperienced in the world to be able to say what the forms and customs of society demand in a case of this kind, but I surely cannot do wrong in confiding in the judgment of those friends to whom you have alluded."

"A thousand thanks for these generous sentiments," replied Deveral. "The declaration of them awakens in my mind emotions to which I have long been a stranger. Your consoling assurances have reunited the links of that social tie which my former degradation had severed, I thought, for ever. I now feel that I belong to one of the circles of the human family, and that I have a claim upon the sympathies of my fellow-beings. But I must restrain my tongue, lest I should be hurried into the utterance of things which the shortness of our acquaintance scarcely authorizes me to express. This evening you shall be introduced to my mother. Need I endeavour to prepossess you in her favour, except

by describing what she has done and endured to save an unworthy son from misery and perdition."

"I shall be happy to make her acquaintance, and so I am sure will my aunt," said Harriet; "but Mr. Hermsdill, let me warn you not to expect from Mr. Bronde the same liberality of feeling that you have found at Sydney. My uncle is just, good, and kind in the main, but his prejudices are numerous and often inveterate. I should not allude to this disagreeable subject, were it not to prepare you to hear of his being violently opposed to our associating even in the least degree."

"I expect as much," returned Deveral, gloomily; "is that man still to prove a source of woe to me? Will he always be a serpent in my path? But do you intend to concede to your uncle's prejudices should he require it? Surely not. His mind is of too coarse a texture to be fitted to dictate what is right and wrong to persons possessing any pretensions to knowledge and refinement."

"Alas!" answered Harriet, "what can I do? He is my guardian both naturally and legally.

I have no protector in the world except himself, and gratitude for past kindness would alone induce me to conform to his wishes, as far as is consistent with common sense and propriety. Had I no prospect of again becoming an inmate of his house, it would be less necessary that I should endeavour to continue upon good terms with him."

"Deeply," exclaimed Deveral, "deeply do I regret that you have any prospect of the kind. If you do return to your uncle's abode, farewell to all intercourse between us; farewell to all the presumptuous hopes I had formed. I shall then be as effectually cut off from the cultivation of your acquaintance as I ever have been, even in the darkest period of my history."

Harriet was embarrassed, and made no reply for a few moments. "But what do you intend to do yourself?" inquired she; "not to remain at Sydney, I suppose."

"Assuredly not," returned Deveral; "this place has at present only one attraction for me. We have not yet determined our future plans; but should my mother's property suffice, we shall probably purchase a small improved farm

in a populous part of the country, and reside upon it, passing the time in domestic enjoyment. Both of us have pursuits and acquirements which happily will render us independent of society, and produce, by their cultivation, that equality of temper which forms a wall of defence against the petty evils and irritation of this life."

Mrs. Lenden now entered the room, and the conversation necessarily became of a general character. Deveral soon took leave, but returned to the house in the evening, accompanied by Mrs. Hermsdill, and met a party similar to that of the preceding night. He observed, with pleasure, that both Miss Bronde and Harriet seemed disposed to render themselves agreeable to his mother, who spoke of them with warmth next morning at breakfast, and he seized the opportunity of informing her of his affection for the latter, and his increasing hopes that he should one day or other be united to her, notwithstanding the repulsive and discouraging auspices under which their acquaintance had commenced. Mrs. Hermsdill was not sur-

prised at this disclosure, for she already had observed enough to lead her to anticipate something of the kind; nor did she feel averse from the idea of Deveral's marriage with Harriet, though she saw many difficulties in the way of it, for she was anxious that he should get settled so as to acquire domestic habits, and a taste for domestic life, which would ensure to him contentment during the necessary period of his residence in New South Wales. She now, therefore, expressed her approbation of his choice, and told him, that having such views, he ought to lose no time in looking out for a farm, and making arrangements for their early removal to it.

This suggestion suited Deveral's frame of mind, and he proceeded to ascertain the exact amount of his mother's property, and to calculate what proportion of it might advantageously be expended in the purchase of land. Having settled these points, he visited several farms that were on sale, within twenty miles of Sydney, and at length met with one which seemed likely to answer his purpose. It was small, and in a fair state of cultivation, and merely required the

improving hand of a person of taste to render it a delightful residence, and a small outlay to make it profitable and productive.

Deveral, though thus engaged, found sufficient time to cultivate the society of Mr. and Mrs. Lenden, with whom he soon became so great a favourite that he was welcome to their house at all hours. He therefore enjoyed very frequent opportunities of seeing and conversing with Harriet; and though he had not yet revealed to her his passion, and its attendant hopes, he felt tolerably confident that she would listen favourably to him, and in this he was correct. Harriet had all along perceived that he loved her, but at first her objection to receiving the addresses of a man who had once been a convict, seemed too strong ever to be overcome; but when she observed the respect with which Deveral was treated by the people around her, and estimated his accomplishments and personal attractions, and lastly considered his immeasurable superiority, in mind and manners, to all other young men whom she had ever met with in the colony, she felt disposed to allow her affections to take their course, and to bestow them

upon him without consulting any one. Though often slow and timid in coming to a resolution, she always fearlessly adhered to it when once formed; and in the present instance she felt little disposed to pay much regard to the opinion of the world, even had it been hostile to her wishes. She dreaded too the idea of returning to her uncle's house, for the period she had already spent there carried with it no pleasing recollections, and there was every reason to suppose that a future residence under his roof would prove still more joyless and uncongenial to her feelings.

Meanwhile, Mr. Bronde, in the solitude of his farm, had received intelligence of what was going forwards, from a correspondent of his own in Sydney. His indignation, as may well be supposed, was very great, and he immediately wrote to his sister, desiring that she would return home without delay, bringing Harriet along with her, as he had determined that the latter should not disgrace herself and her connections by receiving the addresses of a convict; at least while he continued her legal guardian, which would be for two years to come; and that were

she to refuse obedience to his commands, he should find a remedy in the laws of the country.

This letter occasioned no small perturbation in Mr. Lenden's house. He regretted that he had afforded Deveral the means of so often seeing Harriet. Miss Bronde also thought herself to blame, and resolved to obey her brother's orders respecting their early return to his house. Harriet was irritated by her uncle's interference, and alarmed at his threat of taking legal measures to enforce his authority. Deveral felt alternately angry and despondent, and his mother endeavoured to soothe all parties, and to induce them to have recourse to a conciliatory line of conduct.

Mr. Lenden at length suggested that Deveral himself should go to Mr. Bronde, and try to overcome his prejudices, alike by temperate behaviour and persuasive argument, and by a declaration that he felt no enmity towards him, and was ready to forget all former causes of resentment. The success of this expedient seemed doubtful, but no other presenting itself, it was adopted, and Deveral prepared for a journey to the scene of his past servitude and sorrow.

CHAPTER VI.

DEVERAL'S preparations for his journey occupied him till a late hour, the night before he was to commence it. He went to bed unusually fatigued and depressed in spirits, and his sleep was disturbed by hideous dreams, in one of which he imagined that he had been publicly executed for a terrible crime, and afterwards hung in chains at the edge of a forest, in which situation he retained a sense of every thing around him, and a distinct remembrance of the past. The wind roared among the trees, the chains clanked continually, and the boughs from which he was suspended creaked, as if about to break. Showers of withered leaves whirled in eddies around his black body and shrunken limbs, and he heard his name uttered in tones of horror and detestation, by mysterious voices sounding from the recesses of the adjoining forest. Beneath him was a road, which appa-

rently had once been much frequented, but now it was overgrown with weeds, under which numerous old and nearly effaced wheel-tracks were discoverable. No one ever passed there, but he could sometimes perceive a solitary individual making a wide circuit to avoid the spot where he hung, and hurrying along with agitated gait and averted countenance.

Starting from his bed, he tried to overcome the impression produced by these visions, and looked out to observe the weather. The state of the ground shewed that an immense quantity of rain had fallen during the course of the night, for there were large pools of water in every direction. Occasional showers still descended with violence, and the wind was shifting and gusty, and the mass of clouds low and lowering, and the whole aspect of nature gloomy, perturbed, and repulsive.

Deveral intended to perform his journey on horseback, accompanied by a guide, who was also to be mounted, and whom he had instructed to procure a horse for him, and b.ing it to his residence at an early hour that morning. However, he did not arrive at the time appointed,

and Deveral was long kept waiting, in a state of impatient uncertainty. At length, his attendant came, leading the two horses, both of which he fastened by the bridles to a post at the door of the house, while he went to inform Deveral that every thing was ready for their immediate departure. Something now occurred in the street, which startled and frightened the horses, and they quickly broke loose, and gallopped off in different directions. Several persons set out in pursuit of them, but nearly two hours were spent in catching and securing the animals, and the day had thus advanced pretty far before Deveral was able to leave Sydney.

His guide was an European emigrant, who had come to New South Wales as a farmer, but want of steadiness and dissipated habits had been unfavourable to his success in that character, and he now gained a livelihood by making himself useful in various ways to the people of Sydney, which an intimate acquaintance with the localities of the surrounding country, acquired in the course of a wandering life, enabled him easily to do. Deveral, after they had started, entered into conversation with him, but his forwardness proved

so great, and his language so offensive, that the former found it necessary to check him, which he bore with no good grace, and afterwards maintained an obstinate silence.

They had ridden about three miles, when they came to the side of a stream, which usually was shallow and easily fordable; but the late rains had swelled it so much that crossing seemed impracticable, there being no bridge upon it. Burkness, the guide, observed, that as they could not get over to the opposite side till the water fell two feet, it would be better to return to Sydney than to wait for any thing of the kind, which might take place in a couple of hours, but perhaps not in as many days. Deveral had nothing to say upon the subject, and accordingly they retraced their steps, and regained the house of Mrs. Hermsdill, in very bad humour from the disappointments of the day.

She was rather alarmed on seeing Deveral, till he had explained the cause of his unexpected return. "Were I superstitiously inclined," said she, "I should insist upon your abandoning the journey, at least for the present; but were every one to indulge in fancies of this kind, the affairs

of society would suffer a very serious interruption, without any advantage being attained. The starting of horses, and the rising of a river, are things of daily occurrence, and they excite our attention now, merely because circumstances so different in their nature have combined to produce one effect." Deveral assented to these remarks, but at the same time experienced a disagreeable sensation, on hearing that his mother had been led to regard as ominous the events of the day, though she affected to treat the subject in a jesting manner.

It was not till the ensuing morning that Deveral found it expedient again to commence his journey, which he now pursued without any particular interruption till the afternoon of the second day, when they had advanced within seven miles of Mr. Bronde's farm. Here they stopped at a small house having some pretensions to the character of a tavern, in so far as its occupant was in the habit of selling liquors and provisions to the travellers that happened to pass that way. Burkness, in opposition to the remonstrances of Deveral, insisted upon entering the place, saying that its owner was an old friend of his own,

and that he had business with him. The former, therefore, agreed to dismount for a few minutes, but he found immediate reason to regret having done so, for the first object that presented itself on his entering the house was Rachel. The alteration in his dress, the improvement in his looks, and the unexpectedness of their meeting, did not prevent her from instantly recognizing him, which she did with a look of vulgar surprise and keen curiosity. Thinking it best to take no notice of her, he went out of doors, and strolled several times round the house, and then called to his guide, that they ought now to proceed, as the evening was advancing.

Burkness came out with a glass in his hand, and muttered something about the distance they had travelled that day; but as he seemed slightly intoxicated, Deveral made him no reply, but asked a boy, who was standing near, where the master of the house was to be found. "He has gone to Windsor, and won't return home to night," was the answer. "What is the cause of all this delay?" cried Deveral to his guide; "do you mean to attend me any further or not?"

"We had better wait till to-morrow morning," replied Burkness. "The way is lonesome, and here are good quarters, and Mrs. Rachel to entertain us."

"I will not be put off in this way," returned Deveral, angrily. "I mean to reach Mr. Bronde's house to-night, and if you do not choose to accompany me, you shall forfeit what I promised to pay you. I can find the way myself."

"Do so then," answered Burkness, "it is not fitting that I, who came to the country a free man, should wait upon such as you. Rachel has let me into a secret—I can keep it, if ——"

"Begone, ruffian!" exclaimed Deveral. "Did I not consider you intoxicated, you should suffer for your insolence. Away with you! I will not now accept your services."

Having said these words he sprang upon his horse, and gallopped off towards Mr. Bronde's farm, confident enough of finding his way there, though he had not before travelled over the intervening country; for he knew the general direction of his route, and that was sufficient for a person so experienced in journeys of the kind as

himself. Though the sun was still within half an hour of setting, a sort of twilight obscurity prevailed, in consequence of the cloudiness of the western horizon; and this, conjoined with the waving of the long grass, which covered the face of the country, and which often was simultaneously agitated to the extent of several miles by a strong breeze, communicated to the scene a lurid wildness, that was strengthened by the absence of any living objects except Deveral and his horse. He was not in a state of mind to derive any pleasure from the exercise of his imagination, and anxious to substitute physical sensations for disagreeable ideas, he proceeded with a degree of speed which, under other circumstances, a regard for his own safety, and a tenderness for his horse, would have prevented him from attempting; for the ground was broken, and the darkness too great to admit of his choosing his path. On his coming in sight of the farm, an immense black-winged bat burst from a tree close by, and began to hover in circles around him, and continued to do so notwithstanding the rapidity with which he advanced, and the efforts he made to drive it away.

This circumstance, trifling as it was, produced a strong impression upon his already excited mind, and he pursued his way with a shuddering repugnance, which he in vain struggled to overcome.

Every thing in the neighbourhood of the house was in a state of disorder and neglect, and even the building itself had a deserted appearance, which the twinkling of a single light through one of the windows tended little to remove. The garden seemed overgrown with weeds, its fence had in several places been broken down by cattle, and a quantity of rubbish lay upon one of the principal walks. Deveral had just remarked these things, when a man came towards him from the out-houses, and offered to hold his horse while he dismounted, telling him at the same time that his master was unwell, and probably did not wish to see any one. Deveral, nevertheless, desired that his horse might be put in the stable, and then entering the house, made his way to the apartment from whence the light proceeded, and there found Mr. Bronde lying upon a sofa in an undress, and with every appearance of being an in-

valid. Beside him was a small table, with a candle upon it; and various articles, such as wearing apparel, books, and papers, were scattered confusedly around him. Things wore an aspect of indolence, disorder, and comfortlessness, which showed plainly that there was no female hand to manage his domestic affairs, and no kind nurse to attend his sick bed. He was a good deal emaciated, and he looked gloomy, irritable, and desponding; and Deveral, while affected and shocked by the whole scene, felt sensible that his visit was likely to prove both unsatisfactory and ill-timed.

The room was so imperfectly lighted that Mr. Bronde did not, at first, recognize Deveral, but perceiving a stranger, he bluntly enquired what he wanted. The former having by this time come close up to him, he quickly discovered who he was, and started back with an expression of alarm.

"Fear me not;" said Deveral, "my purposes are amicable.—I have changed my character since I last saw you, and hope you also have changed your opinion of me. Are you ill and entirely alone?"

"Alone I am," returned Mr. Bronde, sullenly, "as you must well know—and alone I wish to be. Why do you come here? Have those women sent you to desire me to remember them in my will? Kind creatures! This place was too dull for them—I hope they are enjoying themselves at Sydney."

"Before you blame their conduct," replied Deveral, "you ought to consider whether or not your own has been faultless. Had you treated them with kindness ——"

"Peace, peace, peace!" exclaimed Mr. Bronde. "Though you now consider yourself a gentleman, I will not submit to be lectured by you. To the point at once,—you may sit down, however, for you are not my servant now."

"Pardon me," returned Deveral, "I am your equal, and it is to endeavour to convince you of this, and to remove your prejudices against me, that I have this night come here. I shall not dispute about our respective ranks in society, for I only wish to prove that my conduct never has exhibited any thing derogatory to the character of a gentleman. Twice have I saved you from the bush-rangers, at the imminent risk of my own

life, instead of taking advantage of the numerous opportunities which I have had of avenging the insults received from your tongue and your hand. Though now totally independent of you, I stand here in an attitude of conciliation, willing to forget the past, and to be your friend for the future; but under no other condition than that you will allow your sister and niece freely to associate with me, and the latter even to receive my addresses, should she be so disposed."

"That is right!" cried Mr. Bronde, derisively. "Out with it boldly. You wish to ally yourself to me. Pray do you propose, in that case, to retain your present name? Now hear me, young fellow. You have made a long speech, to which I shall return a short answer. My maxim is this,—once a rogue, always a rogue. They have emancipated you, indeed; but does that make you an honest man? Freedom is a fine thing, and often works wonders; but would giving a negro slave his liberty, make a statesman and a patriot of him? No; and therefore I doubt if, with all your gentleman's airs, you are any better than you were the first day you set foot in

New Holland. I like to see a man who has once been a villain, always continue so, for then you are sure that there is no hypocrisy about him."

"Yours is indeed a base mind," retorted Deveral; "and I am now astonished how I ever could be so foolish as to hope to make any impression upon it. Your ignorance is equalled only by your obstinacy."

"Leave me," cried Mr. Bronde. "I wish to have no more of your talk. Marry my niece, forsooth! Thank you. We 'll wait a little yet. I suppose I can get a conviet for her, any day."

"Let me tell you," exclaimed Gerald, furiously, "that every time you apply that term to me, you utter a falsehood. I will not submit to a repetition of it. If you value your own safety, don't tempt me too far."

At this moment, the door of the apartment was suddenly opened, and the servant who had taken charge of Deveral's horse, and whose name was Marker, entered, and informed Mr. Bronde that several oxen, which would be required in the morning, had strayed from the cattle-shed.

"Then set out after them, I charge you," said his master; "otherwise we shall never see them again."

"But I am the only person now about the farm," answered he. "Rachel, you know, has gone to visit a friend, and will not return till to-morrow. Should I go, there will be no one to attend you."

"I care not," replied Mr. Bronde. "The oxen must be searched for; I don't require any thing to-night, so start without delay." Marker promised to do so, and left the room. A pause of considerable duration ensued. "Our conference, then, is at an end," said the former to Deveral; "and I insist that it shall never again be renewed. It is my desire that we should meet no more. But I will not turn you out of the house, for the night is dark, and the distance to any other place of shelter great. You will find a bed in the room next to this. Sleep in it if you choose, and be off betimes to-morrow morning. I have nothing more to say. There is the door."

Deveral, disgusted by the coarseness and obstinacy of Mr. Bronde, retired, without making

any reply, and left the house, intending to saddle his horse, and gallop back to the place where his guide had deserted him. But when he saw how dark the night was, and recollected the state of the road, and the risk of his losing his way, he did not feel disposed to persist in his design, though he disliked the idea of being indebted, even for a few hours' shelter, to a man who had behaved so offensively towards him. However, a regard for his personal safety, made him overcome these scruples, and he returned within doors, and sought the room to which he had been directed by his host, and lay down without undressing.

Deveral soon dropped into a deep slumber, from which he was awakened in the middle of the night, by a noise in the adjoining chamber, which, however, entirely ceased before his senses had completely recovered from the confusing influence of sleep. He therefore retained no distinct recollection of its nature, and curiosity led him to get up, and gently open his door, and look into the passage outside. The door of the room opposite was ajar; and, presently, a man bearing a lantern, which shed a very dim and faint light,

appeared at it; and on discovering Deveral, stood perfectly still for a few moments, and then hastily left the house by a back way. Deveral immediately conceived that this was the servant who had been sent in quest of the cattle, and that having found them, he had come to inform Mr. Bronde of his success, and thus caused the noise above alluded to. Satisfied with this supposition, he returned to bed, and lay there, anxiously watching for the dawn of day, at the first flush of which he proposed to set out on his route to Sydney, being convinced that to seek a second interview with Mr. Bronde would be to court a scene of mutual anger and recrimination, without effecting any good.

At the first appearance of day-break, Deveral went to the stable and saddled his horse, and proceeded on his way as rapidly as the obscurity of dawn would permit. But though the increasing light soon enabled him to see the road distinctly, he was not so fortunate in his progress as he had been the preceding night, for his horse having put his foot into a hole, stumbled, and came to the ground, throwing his rider over his head. Deveral, in stretching out

his hands to save himself from the shock of the fall, struck his wrist against the stump of a tree, which wounded it much, and made it bleed profusely. He was now about six miles from Mr. Bronde's house, though not at the relative distance from the tavern which he ought to have been, for in the darkness of the morning he had swerved considerably from his true course.

Having a little recovered himself, he dressed his wound, and feeling giddy and languid, lay down upon the ground, holding the bridle in one hand. Here a faintness came over him, and for a time he lost all sense of his situation, and of the things around him. On reviving, he judged from the height of the sun above the horizon, that he had continued in that state nearly two hours. His weakness was now very great, and he found that he had received some severe bruises from his fall, of which he had not previously been aware. Feeling that a draught of water would relieve him, he arose, and tottered along in search of some, leading his horse, for he neither had strength to mount, nor to retain his seat after getting upon the saddle. For a long time he was unsuccessful in meeting with a

spring or rivulet where he might quench his thirst, and he wandered in whatever direction accident happened to lead him.

At length, to his great joy, he suddenly came upon a small pond of stagnant water; but when about to drink, his attention was called away by the sight of five men approaching him with rapidity. Two were on horseback, and the remaining three ran beside them, and every individual was armed, though in different ways. On obtaining a distinct view of him, they cried out to each other,—"It is he! It is he! Let us seize him!" which they immediately did, of course without experiencing any resistance.

Fatigue and astonishment for some time prevented Deveral from speaking, but when two of the party prepared to bind his hands, he objected, and asked what they meant by taking him prisoner, and treating him so. They made no reply, but remarking, for the first time, the wound in his wrist, one of them said,—"He must have received that, in the struggle." Having tied his arms behind his back, they placed him upon his horse, fixing its bridle to that of one of their own, and proceeded at a quick walk, till they reached the tavern.

Here they dismounted, and perceiving Deveral to be very much exhausted, they gave him a little spirits mixed with water, which revived him considerably. A good deal of conversation took place between three of his conductors and the occupant of the house; but, as it was carried on within doors, Deveral could only hear enough to fill him with the most horrible surmises respecting the causes of his seizure and detention. The party, after resting about half an hour, resumed their journey, and did not again stop till the evening, when they entered Windsor, and immediately lodged Deveral in the gaol of that place, where he soon found means to learn that he had been apprehended for the supposed murder of Mr. Bronde.

The unfortunate combination of circumstances which had thus reduced Deveral to a lower state of misery than he had yet experienced, may be detailed in a few sentences. Mr. Bronde was found murdered two hours after Deveral left his house, by Marker, who had been despatched in search of the stray cattle the evening before, and who, having been detained all night in the woods, had only then returned home. He im-

mediately mounted a horse, and gallopped to the nearest farm and gave the alarm, and six or seven persons happening to be assembled there at the time, five of them set out in search of Deveral, who, they doubted not, was the assassin, the messenger having stated that the latter had been alone in the house with his master the whole night, and that violent language had passed between the parties, late in the evening.

It will be remembered that the corporal and the two soldiers who seized and conducted Deveral to Windsor, after his residence in the forest, had been sent out to apprehend a runaway convict, named Michael Jones, who had committed many atrocious acts. Deveral's meeting with these men was a singular instance of bad fortune, though at the time he viewed it in an opposite light; for had he not fallen into their hands, they would have continued their search for the outlaw, and in all probability captured him, and consequently prevented his murdering Mr. Bronde, for he was in reality the guilty person, and it was him whom Deveral had seen carrying the lantern in the house of the deceased.

Jones had for a considerable time entertained the idea of robbing Mr. Bronde, as he was reputed to have a good deal of silver plate in his house, and had anxiously watched for a favourable opportunity of doing so. After hovering about the farm for many days, he at length chose the night of Deveral's visit for the execution of his designs, as the facilities were likely then to be very great. Miss Bronde and his niece were at Sydney; Rachel was to spend that day with the tavern-keeper already mentioned; Mr. Bronde himself was sick; and Marker, who would be the only other individual upon the farm, would sleep in an out-building, leaving the dwelling house entirely unprotected.

On its becoming nearly dark, Jones crept cautiously towards the house, and remained concealed in a place from which he could see every thing that went on out of doors. Observing Marker busy with the cattle, it struck him that it would be a good plan to turn them adrift, and thus render it necessary for him to go in search of them, which would clear the farm of every one except Mr. Bronde, for Jones was entirely

ignorant of Deveral's being in the house, the latter having arrived before he had thought it safe to venture near the spot.

The moment that Marker left the cattle to attend to something else, Jones let them loose, and even drove them away to a considerable distance; and he soon had the satisfaction to see the other go off in pursuit of them. Waiting till the lights were extinguished, and till he thought it likely that Mr. Bronde had fallen asleep, he got his lantern ready, and muffled it, and then entered the house by the back door, and began to search for articles of value. The plunder appeared so various and tempting, that he thought it would be a pity to run any risk of being interrupted in selecting and carrying it off, and he therefore at once went into Mr. Bronde's chamber, and finding him asleep, put him to death without hesitation. It was just after committing this deed that he encountered Deveral in the passage. Terror and astonishment at first rivetted him to the spot; but on recovering a little, he fled from the house, without carrying a single article with him, and sought refuge in the

woods, doubtful whether the being he had so unexpectedly seen was man or demon.

From Windsor Deveral was quickly removed to Sydney, there to stand his trial for the crime with which he was charged. It is unnecessary to describe the feelings of Mrs. Hermsdill and of Harriet, when they received intelligence of his imprisonment, and of the event which had led to it, or to say that they were convinced of his innocence, and saw that he had again become the victim of an evil destiny.

On the trial, the presumptive evidence against Deveral was appallingly strong. It was first proved that he had had a quarrel with Mr. Bronde while formerly in his service, that the latter had struck him, and that there was a rooted enmity between the parties. Afterwards, the evidence turned upon Deveral's journey to the farm; his dismissing his guide when seven miles distant from it; the violent language which Marker had overheard passing between him and the deceased; their being alone together in the house all night; the money and property remaining untouched; Deveral's early de-

parture next morning; and his being found in a wounded state, and apparently anxious to conceal himself, considerably out of the route which he naturally would have taken had he been on his return to Sydney. The prisoner could not call a single witness in his defence, and his assertion that he had seen a man in Mr. Bronde's house at midnight, was of course disbelieved and disregarded. However, the jury returned a verdict of "Not Proven," and he would have been discharged, had it not come out, in the course of the trial, that he had formerly absconded from his master, and been afterwards seen among the bush-rangers. For this he was condemned to be sent to Paramatta, there to be employed in the public works, along with other offenders who were thought to be dangerous characters.

Deveral might have had an interview with his mother, and perhaps even with Harriet, had he been so disposed; but, considering himself now wholly and irretrievably beyond the pale of human society, he utterly rejected any thing of the kind, and two days subsequently to his trial, embarked in the boat which was to convey him to

Paramatta, without having had the least communication with any individual whom he had formerly seen or known at Sydney. His fellow passengers were convicts, both male and female, all of whom seemed to regard their situation with the utmost indifference, and one of the latter made many advances towards forming an acquaintance with Deveral, singing fragments of love songs, with an affected air, leaning her head upon her hand and sighing, and then breaking into loud fits of laughter. Two of the men amused themselves playing picquet, one receiving from his partner the title of your grace, and the other that of your lordship, throughout the game. A third held a fragment of an old newspaper in his hand, and talked to those next to him of the necessity of parliamentary reform; and another, not far off, was complaining of the clumsiness and bad construction of the fetters at that time in use throughout the colony, and suggesting how they might be improved.

At a former time, such a scene would have affected Deveral with disgust, but he now contemplated it with a kind of bitter complacency, as being a satire upon human life,—in so far as it

shewed that the basest, most depraved, and most degraded portion of our species generally are disposed to seek amusement and consolation in imitating the manners, modes of enjoyment, and affected nonchalance of the highest and most refined classes of society.

Deveral was not allowed to remain long unemployed after his arrival at Paramatta. The following day he was conducted to a place where forty or fifty convicts were at work cutting down a steep bank of earth, at the base of which a road was intended to be made. Previously, however, he was equipped in a dress of a particular form and colour, marked with two letters, indicating that he belonged to the factory, and that he was a government labourer. The superintendant furnished him with a pickaxe, and desired him to use it as others did. The convicts were allowed to rest for two hours in the middle of the day, a meal being then served out to each individual. At sunset they were conducted back to the factory, when they received a further supply of provisions, and then were locked up for the night.

Deveral bore this kind of life much better than he had expected to do. Now, he never

was agitated by violent passions of any kind, for his mind had entered into a tacit compact with itself, resolutely to discourage and avoid all retrospection and anticipation. The present was to be considered as everything; his daily work and daily meals were to form the events of his life, and his hours of relaxation and of sleep its pleasures. He was to regard himself as a being who had no interest in anything around him, except in so far as it injured or annoyed him individually, and on whom his fellow men had no claim for sympathy, benevolence, or good offices. He was to stand alone, unloving and unloved, and to feel that he was fulfilling every duty that could justly be required of him as long as he did no evil to any one.

Things had gone on in this way three weeks, when Deveral, one evening, while seated alone upon a bench, with his eyes upon the ground, was accosted by a convict, who, in passing along, took his pipe from his mouth, and hit him gently on the head with the bowl of it. Deveral, on looking up, recognized a man whose appearance had several times before attracted his attention. He seemed about fifty years old, and had the air

of a seafaring person; but Deveral had never heard him allude to his past life, though most of his comrades were disposed to be very sincere and communicative when speaking of themselves. This individual, though silent, reserved, and unassuming, was much respected by the others, none of whom ever attempted to make him the subject of those jokes which were current in the factory at all times.

"I have a notion," said he to Deveral, "that you are tired of this kind of life;—you don't look as if you were born to get your bread by labour. Can you keep a secret?"

"Very easily," replied Deveral, coldly, "for I have not spoken to any one for nearly a month, and would not have done so for a month more, had not you addressed me. I feel no interest in any man or any thing. Your telling me your secret will be no favour to myself, though I will promise not to disclose it."

The convict, whose name was Berriston, looked cautiously around, and then said in a low voice, —"Eight of us here have a scheme of seizing a small vessel that now lies in Paramatta harbour, and putting to sea in her. Now I should not be

sorry were you to accompany us. Though you don't like speaking, I warrant you can fight well enough, though even that, perhaps, won't be necessary, for the crew that we shall have to deal with have neither arms nor numbers to contend against us. What say you?"

This suggestion roused Deveral from that state of apathetic indifference which he had lately cultivated, as being best adapted to his condition, and excited his mind in a degree to which he had long been a stranger. "I rather like your plan," said he, "but before I engage in it, I must have time for consideration."

"That can't be," returned Berriston. "Now or never, is the word. We do the deed to-night. So, if you mean to go with us, you must bear a hand."

"I will go!" answered Deveral, resolutely. "I have nothing to fear now. But, supposing we succeed in our purpose, what is to be our place of destination."

"Why," said Berriston, "I mean to run for New Zealand."

He now communicated to Deveral the details of his proposed enterprise, and the signals which

were to be used by himself and his partizans, when the time arrived for putting it in execution. The beds of the convicts were ranged along the walls of the factory, and under one of them a narrow passage had been made below the foundation of the building, which was to afford the means of egress to the party, who were individually to take an opportunity of creeping into it unobserved by those who were not in their secret. Deveral was the fourth that passed through, and on his emerging outside, a voice called to him in a whisper, to hide himself under a large pile of firewood, where the three convicts who had preceded him were already in concealment. Those who came after him received similar instructions, and, when the whole party was assembled, they united, and rushed in a body towards the harbour, which was not more than four hundred yards from the factory.

Berriston conducted them to a retired part of the beach, where he knew there was a boat lying close in shore. They reached the place without interruption, and immediately took possession of the boat, and rowed away, carrying with them a man whom they found in charge of her, lest he

should give an alarm, and lead to their being pursued. The sloop which was to be seized lay about a mile out, and it being very dark, Berriston found it impossible to steer a direct course for her, and was obliged to trust a good deal to chance, for she shewed no light, and was too small to be discernible even at the distance of a few furlongs. A great deal of time was thus lost in rowing about in search of her, and morning had begun to break before Berriston discovered the object of his pursuit.

The capturing of the sloop proved a business of as little difficulty and danger as that of the boat had done, there being only three people on board of her, and these as ill provided with arms as their assailants were. Berriston ordered the crew to be put in confinement, till he should find it convenient to send them ashore at a part of the coast several miles from Paramatta. He then tripped the anchor, and put out to sea with a light wind.

At sunrise, the departure of the sloop was observed from Paramatta by her master, who was there at the time, and it being also known that several convicts had escaped from the factory in

the course of the preceding night, seized a boat, and put to sea, it became evident enough that they had got possession of the sloop likewise, and were now making off with her as fast as possible. The commandant of the place therefore gave orders that a government surveying vessel, then lying in the harbour, should be despatched in pursuit of the fugitives, and she immediately unmoored, and crowded all sail to get up with them.

The wind had not been strong enough to carry the sloop more than a mile beyond the mouth of the harbour, and Berriston, on observing the government vessel putting to sea, at once perceived on what errand she was bound, and calling to his associates, said,—"It is all over with us! We cannot escape! Shall we submit to be carried back to the hell of the factory, or shall we make a die of it at once? I believe there is powder enough on board to blow us all up.—What then is to be done? Recollect, that we have no arms of any kind to defend ourselves. Resistance is useless."

"Let us all jump overboard," cried one of

the convicts. "Those who can swim strong may reach the shore, which is not very far off, and those who sink will only die a little sooner."

"Agreed," shouted several voices, and in an instant five individuals had leaped into the sea, on the side of the sloop opposite to that on which their pursuers were approaching. Deveral hesitated only a few seconds, and then followed their example, without having any definite idea why he did so, or even distinctly feeling that any particular object was to be attained by obeying the impulse of the moment. He soon lost sight of his companions, or rather was too much taken up with the idea of self-preservation to pay any regard to their movements. The sea was calm, and being an excellent swimmer, he found no difficulty in supporting himself in the water.

At first he impelled himself forwards in the direction in which his face happened to be, but on collecting his senses a little, he resolved to steer towards the nearest land, and looking up to discover where it lay, saw, to his astonishment and alarm, that he was within a hundred yards

of the government vessel, and that he had hitherto unconsciously been making for her with all his strength. Several people with muskets, stood upon her deck, attentively watching his progress, under the impression that he was coming to deliver himself into their hands. But Deveral, on discovering that he had been upon a wrong course, wheeled round in the water, and bore away in an opposite direction. He had scarcely done so, when he heard the report of a musket, and a ball whistled past him, and dropped into the sea a little distance a-head. He now exerted himself to the utmost, and made rapid way, but to no purpose, for another musket was shortly discharged, and the bullet went through his body. He struggled onwards a little further, and then, exhausted by pain and loss of blood, turned upon his back, and floated with his face above the surface of the water.

At this time, a large boat from Sydney was about to enter Paramatta harbour, and the people on board of her had witnessed the whole affair, and being now considerably nearer Deveral than his assailants were, two of them embarked

in a little canoe, and picked him up, and returned with him to their boat. Though extremely weak, he was quite sensible of his situation, and swallowed some wine which was given him. At this moment he heard a well-known voice shriek out his name, and opening his eyes, which had hitherto been closed, he saw his mother bending over him. He could only reply to her looks of anguish by a flood of tears.

"Live, live, Deveral!" cried she distractedly. "We shall yet be happy! Your innocence has been proved. The real murderer of Mr. Bronde has been seized, and has confessed his guilt. I bring an order for your liberation from the Paramatta Factory. We shall go back to Sydney, and make amends for past misfortunes."

"No, no, mother," replied he faintly, and almost inarticulately: "your hopes are vain—*One step in the path of crime seldom can be retrieved!*"

His lips and eyelids closed together at the same moment, and silently intimated that life had fled; but his last words remained impress-

ed upon the minds of the surrounding spectators.

Three weeks after his death, Mrs. Hermsdill, Miss Bronde, and Harriet, embarked in a ship bound for England, where they arrived in safety, and taking a house in the country, lived together as one family.

THE COLAMBOLO.

THE COLAMBOLO.

THE sun was setting upon the coast of Brazil, when Julian Labadro, and his wife, Emilia, wound their way along one of the most elevated parts of it. The path was rocky and narrow, and they advanced at a slow pace, and in melancholy silence, for they were now making a journey which accorded ill with their inclinations, and which had been rendered necessary by their misfortunes and the poverty accompanying them. They had three days before quitted the city of Rio de Janeiro, which had formed their abode during many years of happiness and prosperity, Julian having there been one of its richest merchants; and his Emilia nearly the gayest and most charming of its female inhabitants. But a

series of ruinous speculations, and of losses by sea and land, had suddenly consumed his accumulated wealth, and deprived him of every thing, except a small farm on a remote and thinly inhabited part of the coast. To this he was now hastening, as his only place of refuge, for he had come to the resolution of residing upon it, and deriving means of subsistence from its culture and produce.

In addition to Julian and Emilia, both of whom rode on horseback, the travelling party consisted of two male slaves, and a female one, all strongly attached to their master and mistress, on account of the extraordinary kindness and generosity of their dispositions. There were also six mules loaded with articles of various kinds for the domestic establishment upon the farm, and two drivers to guide them. The nearest *rancho*, or shed, for the accommodation of travellers, was still one mile distant, and Julian urged the whole party to speed, lest they should get benighted among the rocks and precipices, which in many places obstructed the road, or occurred with frightful suddenness at one of its edges.

On reaching the *rancho*, Emilia assisted the slaves in preparing supper for Julian and herself, and though she had hitherto been quite unaccustomed to do any thing of the kind, she now engaged in it with cheerfulness, and at the same time endeavoured, by the vivacity of her conversation, to raise her husband's spirits, and dispose him to enjoy to the utmost, the little that they still could call their own. She was scarcely nineteen years old, but she possessed that vigour and decision of character which are rarely found in persons of mature age; and though her feelings, on first learning the ruined state of Julian's affairs, had been very acute, she much sooner recovered from the shock than himself, and at once entered upon those duties and arrangements which the change in their circumstances had rendered necessary and expedient. She sold without regret her jewels and likewise all her fine dresses excepting one, to be worn on the anniversary of their marriage, for she told her husband that she should always honour that day, and consider it as festive, whether they were rich or poor, or prosperous or unfortunate. Julian was pleased with the compli-

ment implied in this declaration, and followed her example, by retaining an elegant suit from his own wardrobe for the same purpose.

But of all Emilia's trials, that of taking leave of her friends and acquaintances in Rio de Janeiro, had been the most severe; for an extensive circle of these had long shared her love, and liberally and sincerely returned it. When a succession of individuals came to bid her farewell, each bringing some little present, she could hardly command her feelings, and thought that the loss of their society was more to be regretted than the loss of Julian's fortune. Some emotions of self-complacency mingled with her grief, and it seemed to her a cruel thing, that a person so much beloved and admired, and so well calculated to adorn the gay world as herself, should be exiled from it, when there were hundreds of old, ugly, and disagreeable women, on whom a similar misfortune might, with more apparent propriety and justice, have fallen. Emilia, though sensible of her loveliness, was neither vain nor desirous of receiving homage on account of it. She considered personal attractions merely as a valuable gift from nature, ren-

dering their possessor pleasing to every one, and enabling her to enjoy that sunshine of mind which is a quality that belongs to all beautiful people who do not seek to make their beauty an engine for the gratification of their vanity, self-interest, or ambition. If Emilia ever was guilty of any thing of the kind, it was in such a harmless and equivocal way, as neither to deserve reprobation, nor to injure the serenity of her temper.

The *rancho*, under the shelter of which they supped, consisted of two ranges of wooden posts supporting a tiled roof. One side of the structure was enclosed by a sort of wattle-work of bamboos and grass, but the rest of it was open and unprotected; and Julian and Emilia, instead of sleeping in a chamber fronted with handsome *jalousies*, had to lie down in a small enclosure, formed by their baggage, and surrounded outside by mules and horses and their drivers. They were now only five miles from their farm, where they expected to arrive early the succeeding day; but as neither of them had yet seen the place, their curiosity respecting its situation, appearance, and conveniences, was great, and before going to sleep, they entered into various specu-

lations upon these subjects, which were interrupted by a violent fall of rain, accompanied with thunder and lightning. This continued a considerable part of the night, but the morning rose clear, balmy, and fragrant, and they set out cheerful in spirit and pleased with the prospect of soon concluding their journey.

They gradually diverged from the sea-shore, which they had hitherto followed pretty closely, and entering a wooded country, found nature wearing her finest aspect, and abounding in features of interest and attractiveness. Trees of the loftiest size grew within a few yards of each other, their trunks almost concealed by the brushwood, or having verdant screens of creepers of different kinds extending between them. Here and there, the palm species reared its branchless stem, and in other places the stately *catalpa*, dark and rich in its foliage, and clothed with an exuberance of boughs, rose like a verdant dome above the level of the forest. No appearance of vegetable decay existed anywhere. The withered leaves upon the ground were concealed by green underwood; and mosses, and parasitical plants, mantled round the trunks and

branches of dead trees, whether they remained erect, or had fallen prostrate upon the surface of the soil. The country exhibited many marks of the operation of the tempest of the preceding night, the paths being strewed with fresh leaves, guavas, wild lemons, and other tropical fruits, and intersected with ravines, along the bottom of which rivulets, formed by the recent showers, flowed with a transient rapidity and violence. The floundering horses and mules, on descending and ascending their banks, often dropped upon their knees, nearly precipitating their riders over their heads. The utmost luxuriance of vegetation and brilliancy of verdure presented themselves on every side, and the trees and shrubs appeared already to have begun to repair the injuries sustained from the blasts and showers of the preceding night, and to be putting forth buds and leaves with a vigour and rapidity that almost seemed sensible to the eye. Flocks of paroquets and other beautiful birds fluttered about; and monkeys, gambolling from branch to branch, often detached the fruit from the lime and orange trees, and allowed it to drop on the heads of the travellers below.

Julian and Emilia were delighted to find that their farm was situated in the neighbourhood of so beautiful a country, and every step they advanced, increased their anxiety to come in sight of it. They soon were gratified in this, and happily the scene did not disappoint their expectations.

The farm lay upon the side of a small river, which had steep banks, and a rapid and transparent current. The cultivated land did not exceed twenty acres in extent, but the woods covering the adjoining country were light and open, and possessed more beauty than gloom; and within sight was a large and well cleared estate belonging to a Spanish gentleman, who was then residing upon it. Several cows, a flock of poultry, and a few fields of *mandioca*, and one of sugar-cane, formed the amount of Julian's available property, besides a house of a very humble description. The walls consisted of a rude frame-work of wood interwoven with twigs, the whole being plastered with clay, and afterwards whitewashed. The dried hide of an ox, stretched upon a quadrangle of sticks, and attached to the wall by thongs, formed the door.

The interior of the house was divided into two apartments by a partition similar in composition to the outer walls, and the bare ground smoothed and levelled formed the floor of the dwelling. A few yards off stood a small range of out-buildings for the accommodation of the slaves, and constructed in the same manner as the principal house.

Emilia's first care was to render the interior of their habitation as neat as possible. She arranged the few articles of furniture which they had brought from Rio with taste and judgment, while Julian employed himself in directing the labours of the slaves out of doors. But the utmost exertions of both parties could effect but little in the way of improvement, their materials being sadly deficient, and their ignorance of country affairs not permitting them to apply these to the best advantage.

Two days after their arrival, they received a visit from Don Lublos, the proprietor of the adjoining estate. He was about fifty-five years of age, and by no means attractive either in manners or personal appearance. His complexion was sallow, and his countenance expressed a mixture of self-

ishness and sensuality, and the natural clumsiness of his figure was rendered doubly apparent by his slovenly style of dress. He now wore a long and wide chintz dressing-gown, carelessly buttoned in front, and a square cap of the same material. His stockings hung in folds about his ancles, and his feet were thrust into a pair of tarnished yellow morocco slippers. He carried a gold-headed bamboo cane in one hand, and a snuff-box in the other, and was followed by a negro boy bearing a gaudy-coloured silk umbrella to protect his master from the sun. Though the customs of Rio de Janeiro allow gentlemen great latitude with respect to dress, even in the presence of ladies, and though the former are, generally speaking, quite indifferent to personal neatness, still Emilia had never before seen such slovenliness as Don Lublos now exhibited, and she felt highly displeased that he should appear before her in such a style, and was disposed to regard his visit rather as an insult, than as an act of courtesy.

However, the gentleman himself seemed to have no idea that any thing of the kind was passing in her thoughts, for he approached her with

an easy confidence; and having gone through the ceremonies and salutations usual on such occasions, began conversing in a style of familiarity and condescension that was particularly offensive to his auditors, both of whom considered themselves his superiors in every thing except wealth. Don Lublos was a determined egotist, and spoke of himself and his affairs with an air of importance, which seemed to indicate that he felt that he had a right to the undivided attention of his hearers. His manners to Julian were patronizing, and he invariably addressed Emilia in a tone of encouragement, as if she had been awed and abashed by his presence. He examined, and made his remarks upon every thing around him, and usually, when speaking of any article within view, rose from his seat, and touched it with the end of his cane. After a long visit, marked by impertinences similar to those above described, he took leave, bestowing what he meant should be a tender smile upon Emilia, and telling her husband that he should always feel happy to protect and assist him, while they continued to be neighbours.

In the evening, Julian and Emilia, having

finished their daily duties, set out upon a walk in the direction of the river, which they had as yet seen in one part of its course only. Its banks were rocky, and in many places quite perpendicular, and its channel had the most rugged appearance imaginable, being sinuous and obstructed by large fragments of stone, and presenting, every few yards, several irregular-shaped excavations of various sizes, over which the water boiled furiously, or played in eddies. Here the torrent might be seen dashing along its sloping bed in the form of a small cataract, wreathed with foam of a dazzling whiteness; and a little further on, it would become a deep, still, and sullen-looking pool; and then, perhaps, extend itself into a transparent sheet, and glide, with noiseless rapidity, and silvery brightness, over level tablets of variegated rock. Julian and his fair companion ascended the stream till they reached the bounds of their farm, and found their further progress along its banks interrupted by a thick growth of underwood. Here its channel also became much narrower, and its banks more precipitous, while the strata composing them exhibited a strange variety of vivid colours, which,

contrasting with each other, and with the dark green of the overhanging trees, produced a wild picturesqueness, deriving a tinge of the horrible from the roaring of the water, and the sombreness and depth of the ravine through which it held its course.

Emilia, observing something like a path descending obliquely to the river, along the face of the bank upon the top of which she stood, proposed to Julian that they should follow it, and gain the level of the stream below. At first he objected, on account of the steepness of the way, and the danger they might incur from snakes and wild beasts; but Emilia declaring that she had more courage than himself, he consented to her proposal, and they scrambled down the front of the precipice, and reached the edge of the river without accident. Here they found themselves upon a surface of flat rock, which was in many places perforated with holes, and scooped out into cavities of a circular form. Pebbles of beautiful appearance were scattered everywhere, and Emilia, while stooping to pick up one of these, was struck with the colour and lustre of a quantity of sand, that had accumulated in the bottom of

several of the natural excavations already mentioned. She collected a handful, and holding it up in the light of the setting sun, examined it for a few moments, and then exclaimed to her husband,—"Gold, as I live! Here is abundance of gold-dust! I cannot be deceived: I have often seen such in the jewellers' shops at Rio. What a discovery to persons situated as we are!"

"Moderate your joy," returned Julian, a good deal agitated. "Recollect how many persons have been led into mistakes upon this subject. I am not sure that either of us has knowledge enough to detect gold with certainty; but, nevertheless, what you shew is of promising appearance. Let us obtain a greater quantity, and we shall analyze it at leisure, when we return home."

They now emptied of sand all the cavities in the rock that they conveniently could reach, and selecting that part of their contents that lay nearest the bottom, deposited the spoils in a handkerchief. In these operations, Julian had been much encouraged by recollecting that the *Lavadores*, or people who obtain a subsistence by

collecting gold-dust from the beds of rivers, always find the greatest proportion of the precious metal in those hollows in which the sands are permitted to accumulate, after being hurried along by the current above.

Julian and Emilia now hurried homewards, having taken care to mark the spot at which they had descended to the bed of the river. They found it advisable to defer the examination of their treasure till after supper, when they should not be exposed to interruption from their slaves, for they judged it expedient to conceal even from them, faithful as they were, the important discovery which their evening ramble had produced. The meal being concluded, and the negroes sent to bed, Julian brought out the handkerchief containing the sand, and subjected it to experiment by putting a quantity in a bowl with some water, and giving the vessel a rotatory motion, in order that the particles of sand, being lightest, might be washed towards its edge, and projected over it, while those of gold would, owing to their weight, remain at the bottom. Emilia looked on, not with the anxious curiosity of avarice, but in the hope that fortune had

thrown in their way the means of improving their condition, and perhaps even restoring them to prosperity.

Julian continued the operation above described without stopping; for he remarked that the sediment at the bottom of the bowl was rapidly increasing in quantity, and also that it possessed the orange-brown colour, which is usually regarded as an indication of gold-dust. Emilia's impatience now became too great to be controlled, and she put some of the granular powder into an iron spoon, and exposing both to a strong heat, soon found herself in possession of a tolerably sized piece of gold. The joy of the fortunate couple was boundless, and they deferred making any more experiments at that time, satisfied with what they had already ascertained. But though the existence of the precious metal in the river was now proved beyond a doubt, the quantity that would be found was still a subject of interesting conjecture, though Julian was led to believe that it would be large, from the number of excavations filled with sand which he had observed along the edges of the stream, and from the supposition that its bed had not hitherto

been searched by any one, or even suspected to contain gold.

In the morning he again descended to the side of the river, and crossing and recrossing it in search of the auriferous sand, obtained a large quantity, and carried it home in triumph, for the inspection of Emilia. About sunset they went in company for the same purpose, and were equally successful. But it soon occurred to them, that such frequent visits to the river, and the eager search which they pursued while there, were likely to attract the attention either of their own slaves, or of those of Don Lublos, some of whom were generally loitering in the neighbourhood of the stream, and that a discovery of its riches would be the consequence, of which Don Lublos would be the first to take advantage; for though wealthy, his avarice was notorious and unbounded. The number of his slaves, and the means which he had at command, would enable him to commence washing for gold on a great scale, and thus to appropriate to himself those advantages, the undivided possession of which was of indescribable importance to the indigent Julian and Emilia. They therefore agreed to avoid going

to the river for several days, in order to lull any suspicion that might have been excited in any quarter, and to devise some plan for conducting their future operations.

Meanwhile Julian, at the suggestion of his wife, returned Don Lublos's visit. This gentleman's house, though large and commodious, was meanly furnished, and as deficient in neatness or elegance as its proprietor. Julian on entering, found himself in a long veranda where there were a great many slaves occupied in different ways, some being asleep on the ground, others sewing or knitting, and a third set preparing *farinha* from the *mandioca* roots. Five or six children, of various ages and sexes, and nearly naked, and presenting all shades of complexion from black to brunette, were running to and fro, amusing themselves. Within a chamber opening into the veranda, Julian observed a corpulent coarse-looking woman reclining in a hammock, and swinging backwards and forwards. She wore neither shoes nor stockings, and at intervals struck the wall with one of her feet, to give the hammock the impulse requisite for putting it in motion. Her only employment seemed to be

that of scolding the children, and giving orders to the negroes, both of which she did in a loud querulous tone, and with much gesticulation. When Julian entered the house she was so deeply engaged in this way as not to perceive him for some moments; but at length, throwing a surly glance towards him, she desired one of the slaves to inform his master that a stranger wished to see him.

Don Lublos soon made his appearance from an adjoining apartment, and requested Julian to accompany him into it. Here things were in a little better order than in other parts of the house, though far from being either neat or well-arranged. Don Lublos seemed to have been swinging in a hammock after the manner of his wife, or mistress, for Julian could not, at that time, ascertain whether she was one or the other. On a small table in the middle of the room lay an old Spanish court calendar, a bundle of Havannah cigars, and a large chapeau bras, bound with gold lace, which was now tarnished by age. The Don's conversation was similar in style to what has already been described, and Julian, after enduring it a reasonable time, was happy to take

his departure, and return home, where, limited as his accommodations were, they appeared infinitely more inviting than the spacious ones which he had just quitted, particularly as they were brightened by the presence of Emilia, whom he could not avoid delightedly contrasting with the female whom he had seen in the course of his morning visit.

After a few days Julian and Emilia resumed their search for gold dust, of which they still continued to obtain considerable quantities, though not with such quickness and facility as at first. They found it necessary to go further up the bed of the river, and this was both difficult and fatiguing, on account of the steepness of its banks, and the rockiness of its channel; and though Emilia had hitherto assisted her husband in collecting the sand, she could not now do so any longer, and Julian went upon the errand alone, sometimes in the moonlight nights, and sometimes during the day. Of late, Don Lublos had been remarkably frequent in his visits, and offensively attentive to Emilia, who remarked that he almost always happened to come to the house during Julian's absence, of which

he appeared to have some means of obtaining exact information. On these occasions his manners, though not decidedly rude, had a style of libertinism that both alarmed and disgusted her, and he was in the daily habit of sending her presents of fruit and sweetmeats and similar things, which, though too trifling to merit a refusal, were most unacceptable, because she distrusted the motives and intentions of the giver.

Things went on in this way several weeks. Julian now possessed a large quantity of gold, which had hitherto been of no use to him on account of his having no means of disposing of it. His wants, and those of Emilia were numerous, but the part of the country in which they resided, was too thinly peopled and uncivilized, to admit of their supplying these by purchase or traffic, for there was no merchant within thirty or forty miles of their farm, and the few neighbouring inhabitants had not for sale any of the articles which they most required.

About this time Julian learned from one of Don Lublos's slaves, that a small American schooner had anchored off the mouth of the river, for the purpose of obtaining a cargo of dye-

wood, which was to be cut by her own crew. Julian thought it probable that the master of the vessel would have various kinds of merchandize to dispose of, and that he would willingly barter it for gold-dust, which foreigners often were disposed to receive in preference to money itself. He communicated this idea to Emilia, and the result was, that he determined to go to the mouth of the river the following day, carrying with him a quantity of gold dust, and attended by their two slaves, to be employed in bringing home the articles which he might purchase. The distance to the sea was two miles, and the path lay through a forest, and offered various obstructions to the foot traveller, being marshy, and intersected in many places by small rivers of water of considerable depth.

Julian set out at an early hour, and in the course of the morning Emilia received a visit from Don Lublos, as she had anticipated. She did not conceal from him the cause of her husband's absence, or the purpose which had led him to go to the mouth of the river, and the Don seemed to listen to her with some surprise, and then sank into a fit of abstraction for a few

moments, from which he recovered with a satisfied air, and apologized to Emilia for his apparent inattention. He then expressed his regret that he had not sooner learnt Julian's design, as he should, in that case, have provided him with mules from his estate, both for riding and for the carriage of the articles which he proposed to buy. "But," continued he, "if the señor find it necessary to make another journey of the kind, I must insist upon furnishing him with means of conveyance; for to travel such a distance, and through such roads, upon foot, is likely to endanger any man's health, and I have plenty of idle cattle of all kinds at command." This was uttered with an appearance of sincerity and benevolence which pleased Emilia, and she began to regard Don Lublos with more complacency than she had hitherto done, particularly as he now took leave without having once attempted that offensive kind of gallantry with which he had so often before annoyed her.

Julian returned from his expedition late in the evening much fatigued, but cheerful on account of his success. The American had bartered a variety of articles for the gold-dust, and the two

negroes were loaded almost beyond their strength. Emilia was so anxious to examine these new acquisitions, that she caused every thing to be unpacked and unfolded without delay, that she might at least enjoy a view of the different luxuries and conveniencies which had so suddenly flowed in upon them, and none of which probably had ever before found their way within the walls of their humble dwelling. Besides articles of apparel, Julian had obtained a small table equipage, a quantity of wine, and a number of things essential to domestic comfort; and he might have greatly extended his purchases, had he carried with him a sufficient supply of gold, which he had avoided doing, for he feared that a liberal display of it would have excited troublesome inquiries from those with whom he proposed to traffic. However, as nothing of the kind had occurred, he resolved to make a second expedition to the schooner, and to exchange the remainder of his gold-dust for any sort of merchandize, as it was not likely that an opportunity of doing so would soon occur again. Emilia told him of the offer of mules which Don Lublos had made, and Julian, though unwilling to lay himself

under obligations to his disagreeable neighbour, felt disposed to avail himself of his politeness in this single instance, because he could not otherwise obtain what he required; for it ought to have been mentioned, that the horses and mules which had conveyed himself and his property from Rio de Janeiro were hired, and consequently had been sent back to their owner the day after his arrival upon the farm.

Don Lublos was a miser and a sensualist. He had long lived in the neighbourhood of Julian's property, and was rich in so far as he possessed a large and fertile estate; but he had little money, and that little he kept locked up in a chest, occasionally adding a few hundred dollars to the amount, but never withdrawing even the smallest sum; for, though luxuriously inclined, he made it a rule to dispense with every thing that was not to be found upon his farm, or could not be obtained in exchange for its produce. He led a gross and indolent life, and was in a great measure ruled by a Portuguese woman, who managed his domestic affairs, and had done so for many years. While from home, which seldom was the case, he affected the manners of a grandee, and

displayed in various ways the self-conceit and vanity which were inherent parts of his character, but which he did not dare openly to indulge in presence of his housekeeper, who well knew how unfounded his pretensions to gentility were, and never failed to tell him so when he assumed any thing of the kind.

The arrival of Julian and Emilia in his neighbourhood gave him great satisfaction, not only because he should have an opportunity of playing off his airs of importance before them, but because the lady was charming in manners and person, and therefore a fit object of conquest. Don Lublos fancied himself very prepossessing in the eyes of the female sex; for being in the habit of seeing the wives of a few Brazilian peasants only, who lived near his estate, and always being well received by them, and treated with marked attention, he was vain enough to suppose that his company would prove equally acceptable to ladies of rank and education. He was pleased to observe the poverty of Julian, which the latter indeed could not have concealed, even had he felt inclined to do so; for it seemed likely to increase his chances of success with his wife,

and would, at all events, render both parties humble and complaisant to himself; for nothing annoyed Don Lublos so much as a display of importance and high pretensions by other people.

Under these impressions, Don Lublos had commenced and continued his attentions to Emilia, his self-conceit rendering him insensible of the dislike which she manifested towards him, or at least willing to believe, that it was affected for the purpose of concealing the impression which he had made upon her heart. But he at length perceived to his infinite mortification, that he was making no progress even in her esteem or good opinion, and that he was not likely to accomplish his wishes without the aid of some powerful auxiliary, which would bring her under his dominions.

Julian's first journey to the mouth of the river suggested to Don Lublos a way by which he might render the young couple completely subservient to himself. He had for several days previous entertained suspicions that the former had been searching for gold-dust and had obtained some, and his expedition to the schooner to make purchases seemed to confirm these, for it

appeared unlikely that Julian could have brought any considerable sum of money from Rio de Janeiro. However, to decide the matter, Don Lublos despatched a slave to watch Julian's motions, and if possible to discover in what way he would pay for the articles which he might purchase from the American. The spy executed his commission so well, that he not only ascertained the delivery of the gold-dust, but was able to declare that the quantity must have been very considerable, from the number and variety of effects which Julian had brought home with him.

To account for Don Lublos's anxiety respecting the transaction, it is necessary to state, that in Brazil the sale or exchange of gold-dust in any way whatever is totally prohibited by government, in order that the metal may, immediately after it is found, be brought to the royal mint, where twenty-five *per cent.* upon the whole quantity is deducted, as a *droit* of the crown, and the remainder either coined or formed into bars bearing the king's stamp, and returned to the owner.

It was upon this law that Don Lublos proposed to found the power which he wished to ac-

quire over Emilia and her husband; for, could he obtain the evidence of two witnesses that the latter had bartered gold-dust with the master of the American schooner, he should have the fate and fortunes of the young couple in his hands: for Julian's infringement of the law rendered him liable at least to confiscation of property, and, perhaps, also to long imprisonment.

Don Lublos, while revolving these matters in his mind, paid a visit to Julian; and in the course of conversation, learned, to his great joy, that another expedition to the mouth of the river was in prospective. He repeated his request, that he might be allowed to furnish mules for the journey, to which Julian readily assented; and he then went away, promising to send them to the house next morning. He hastened homewards, and calling into his presence a convenient ruffian who resided in the neighbourhood, directed him to proceed to the coast, to go on board the American schooner early the following day, and remain there, on some pretence, till Julian arrived, whose proceedings he was to watch narrowly, and to endeavour, in particular, to witness the delivery of gold-dust by the latter,

to the master of the vessel. Don Lublos likewise deputed another of his creatures to attend Julian on his journey, under the plea of taking charge of the mules; and on their reaching the mouth of the river, to accompany him to the schooner, and there to act in concert with his fellow spy. These plans were successful. Both of the men contrived to be present, during the whole of Julian's transactions with the American, and to see enough to be able to give condemning evidence against the former, whenever it might be required. Their employer, pleased with their management and dexterity, gave each of them a considerable reward, and then began to consider what use he should make of the power which he had thus treacherously acquired.

Profligate love and avarice were now struggling for ascendancy in the bosom of Don Lublos. At first, his only idea had been to render his knowledge of Julian's infringement of the law, a means of frightening Emilia into a compliance with his desires; but he now felt a strong inclination to discover where the former had procured the gold-dust, that he also might profit by the riches which appeared to lie concealed in the bed of the

river. Don Lublos was grossly ignorant on every subject unconnected with his own pursuits; and though he had spent fifteen years in Brazil, he imagined that what usually is called gold-dust, consisted of filings taken from immense masses of the metal, lying so deeply imbedded in the rock, that they could not be removed either entire, or in large fragments. He therefore supposed that Julian had discovered one of these, and that nothing but fear ever would induce him to disclose in what part of the stream it existed. "Now," thought he to himself, "whether is the possession of Emilia, or of an exhaustless treasure, most to be coveted? But stay,—cannot I obtain both? Yes; it shall be so. I will first threaten to bring ruin upon herself and her husband, if she does not consent to receive me as a lover; and when tired of her, I can use the same means to make Julian confide to me the situation of the mass of gold, which now supplies his necessities."

While Don Lublos was conspiring in this manner against the peace and happiness of Julian and Emilia, they were enjoying the produce of their recent traffic with the American, and

fondly anticipating, that a perseverance in collecting gold-dust would eventually enable them partly to retrieve their fallen fortunes, or at least to quit their present cheerless residence, and return to Rio de Janeiro. Though their most urgent wants were now supplied, they did not suspend their diligence in cultivating the means, which had afforded them the power of removing them; and Julian made frequent visits to the bed of the river, advancing as far up as he safely could, while Emilia occasionally gathered a little of the precious metal, in those parts of the channel that were of more easy access.

One evening, while thus engaged, and casting many wistful glances up the dark and narrow chasm through which the river wound its precipitous course, and regretting that she could not find her way to the mine from which the gold-dust was produced, she perceived an extraordinary figure coming down the cliffs opposite, and surveying her with much attention. The general appearance of this individual resembled that of a negro, but the colour of his skin was a dark and dirty brown, and his arms and hands were dispro-

portionately large and long. An immense bulk of woolly, matted hair, intermixed with earth, dried leaves, and fragments of grass, enveloped his head, and descended nearly to his eyes, which were small and fiery-red, and apparently very weak, for the monster often shaded them with his clumsy hand, particularly when he happened to look upwards. His dress consisted of a piece of coarse mat, wrapped carelessly round his body, and kept in its place by twigs of the *sipo* plant, instead of strings. He carried a heavy knotted stick in one hand, and a *lasso* made of dried hide in the other, and around his neck hung a large knife, a sharp-pointed bone, and several minor articles.

Emilia was so terrified by his appearance, and the more so because he evidently intended to approach her, that she felt at first incapable of moving in one direction or another; but the mild, or rather stupid expression of his countenance, and the quietness of his demeanour, gave her confidence, and instead of flying from him, she merely walked homewards at a moderate, though rather agitated pace. The monster slowly followed her, making various signs, which she

was not collected enough to endeavour to understand; and stopping within a few yards of the house, seated himself upon the ground, while Emilia hurried inside, but found that both her husband and the slaves had gone out, and that she was as destitute of protection, as she had been while at the side of the river. Looking fearfully towards her visitor, from a window, she observed that he remained in the same spot, and that he seemed much emaciated and exhausted, while his gestures expressed something like a desire for food.

This impression gave her courage, and she carried out a quantity of bread and milk, and *carne secca*, and placed them near him, beckoning him to come forward and eat. This he immediately did, and with such evident satisfaction and voracity, that she could no longer doubt that hunger alone had caused him to follow her to the house. Leaving him to enjoy his meal, she went within doors, and engaged in her usual domestic occupations, and almost forgot that he was near, till she heard a clapping of the hands, and a long wild howling. He had finished the greater part of the provisions, and was securing the remainder,

in order to carry it along with him. On seeing Emilia, he repeated his barbarous salutations, and then sprang away, and descended to the bed of the river.

In the course of half an hour, Emilia had another visitor, who was, if possible, less welcome than the first. Don Lublos entered the house with an easy confidence, and a presumptuous expression of countenance; and seating himself close to the lady, directed towards her several admiring looks, at the same time requesting her acceptance of a small string of pearls.

"What is the meaning of this?" inquired Emilia, with astonishment. "I am not accustomed to take presents from any gentleman except my husband, and must beg leave to decline receiving your gift."

"Charming girl!" returned Don Lublos, seizing her hand: "are you then satisfied with possessing my heart? You are right; for believe me you will find it to be of more worth than all the jewels that I could offer."

"It is a property which I neither value nor covet," replied Emilia, contemptuously; "and

it is therefore thrown away upon me. I possess my husband's heart, and the offer of any other I consider an insult, from whatever quarter it may come."

"Delightful simplicity!" exclaimed Don Lublos. "I perceive, my little friend, that I must be more explicit with you; for your rank of life doubtless has prevented your becoming intelligent in those refined modes of expression, which persons moving in the higher spheres of society are accustomed to employ, in conveying their sentiments and wishes upon certain subjects. But, in the mean time, you must throw aside your reserve and timidity. Reassure yourself. Do not let my presence abash and agitate you. I can make many allowances for those who are deficient in that ease and self-possession which may be considered the insignia of polished life, particularly if they are docile and disposed to improve themselves."

"I will not listen to any more of your absurdities," cried Emilia, angrily. "If you mean to say that my husband and myself have not been accustomed to good society, I must tell you that you are utterly mistaken, and that

never till I came here, have I been in the habit of associating with a person of so low a grade as yourself. Your idea of encouraging me, and making allowances for my deficiency in point of good manners, sets me laughing. Permit me to observe that you, alone, require tuition and improvement on these points, though I suspect that your vanity, ignorance, and dullness of perception will render the one ineffectual, and the other beyond the range of possibility. I see that I have astonished you, señor. Are not you pleased to find me throwing aside my timidity? With respect to the other allusions which you have made, I must simply say that, should they again be repeated under any form whatever, I shall at once refer you to my husband for a satisfactory reply to them."

During this address from Emilia, Don Lublos had risen from his chair, and showed his emotion and displeasure in various ways, but seeing her continue unabashed and undaunted, he entirely lost that self-possession of which he had just been boasting, and regarding her with a look of mingled anger, disappointment, and admiration,

muttered something between his teeth, and hurried from her presence.

Emilia, believing that she had effectually checked the further addresses of Don Lublos, and hoping that he would henceforth discontinue his visits, did not think proper to inform her husband of what had passed between them, lest a serious quarrel should be the consequence. Anxious to withdraw her own attention from so disagreeable a subject, she related to Julian, on his return home, her adventure with the frightful being who had followed her to obtain food, and described his manners and appearance as faithfully as she was able. Julian told her that the monster was what is named a *Colambolo*, a race of people perhaps peculiar to Brazil. The term is applied to those negroes who, in consequence of bad treatment or an intolerance of any kind of labour, have fled from their owners, and concealed themselves in the forests; where some of them lead the life of a solitary beast of prey, eating their food raw, whether it be animal or vegetable, and lodging in caves, or in the hollows of trees, and avoiding any intercourse

with the human species, and eventually forgeting their own language, and losing all those faculties that are not essential to self-preservation. They seldom are mischievously inclined, and never approach the habitations of men, except when pressed by extreme hunger, when, if food be not offered to them, they do not hesitate to relieve their wants by stealing.

Julian now complained to Emilia that gold-dust was becoming scarce, and that what he found was hardly sufficient to repay the time and labour expended in searching for it. He said that he had no doubt that some veins of solid metal existed towards the source of the stream, and that he should make an excursion to discover their situation, provided she could submit to be left alone for several days. Emilia had private reasons for dreading so long a separation from her husband at that time, and finding her opposed to the scheme, he agreed to drop it, or at least to defer its execution till a more convenient season.

Next morning, Emilia unexpectedly received a visit from Don Lublos, and imagining that he came to apologize for his offensive conduct on

the preceding day, she restrained her resentment, and treated him with cold and distant civility. "I thought," said she, "that our last interview would have put an end to any further intercourse between us, and I am still desirous that it should have that effect."

"My dear señora," returned he, with an ill-natured smile, "you entirely mistake the thing. Our acquaintance is only about to begin. I do not usually find it necessary to force my company upon any woman, but since caprice or affectation renders you averse from receiving my addresses, I must employ measures to bend you to my will, and to bring you to your senses."

"What am I to understand by these words?" demanded Emilia, rising from her seat.

"Nay, do not fear," returned Don Lublos, "but listen to me. If I recollect right, you told me the other day how dear your husband was to you. I shall now put your boasted affection to the test. Julian is in my power. I can bring ruin upon him in one moment. My forbearance will depend upon yourself."

"What insane threats are these?" cried Emilia. "I am not to be intimidated by false-

hoods of the kind. My husband is alike innocent and honourable, and has no reason to fear any one."

"I have nothing to do with his honour," replied Don Lublos, "provided I succeed in triumphing over yours. The immaculate young man has, however, been selling gold-dust, as I can at any time prove by the testimony of two witnesses. The laws of Brazil award confiscation of property and imprisonment for an offence of the kind. Whether will you expose your Julian to these, or accept my attentions? Choose the alternative. My resolution upon the subject is unalterable."

Emilia remained some time in a state of silent and incredulous astonishment. "No, no!" cried she, looking in Don Lublos's face with intense interest, and a sort of hopeful suspense, "this cannot be true. You are playing upon my feelings. Were there a law such as you mention, my husband must have been aware of its existence. He did exchange gold-dust for merchandize, but what of that?"

"Only that he is liable to severe punishment for having done so," answered Don Lublos,

coolly and carelessly. "Silly girl! do you still hesitate to save him, when the price of his security lies at this moment in your own gift? Neither he nor the world shall know any thing of my success."

"Away, detestable traitor!" exclaimed Emilia. "I will not degrade myself by entreating mercy or forbearance from one who would not practise either, except to advance his own wicked purposes. Away, away! As you have already acted the spy, complete your infamy by becoming also an informer. But meanwhile, beware! For should the least injury befal my husband through your means, vengeance, sudden and signal, and satisfactory, may be inflicted by one who probably now appears in your eyes to want the courage and resolution necessary for doing any thing of the kind."

Don Lublos was awed by the boldness and energy of her manner, and felt irresolute whether to prolong the conversation, or quit the house. "Lady," replied he, "it would be ungenerous to press you to come to a decision at this time. Your feelings are excited by the unexpectedness of my communication, and you

cannot view the subject calmly and dispassionately. But I shall expect a reply to my proposals this evening, and here is a little bouquet, expressing, in the language of flowers, that you are favourably disposed towards the person to whom you send it. I now leave it with you, in expectation of receiving it again to-night, through the hands of your messenger of love. No other mode of communication will be requisite."

Emilia snatched the flowers from the hand that proferred them, and tearing them in pieces, scattered the fragments upon the floor. Don Lublos quivered with rage, and struck the ground with his cane, and left the house in silence.

Emilia, immediately on being relieved from his presence, hastened towards Julian, who was engaged upon the farm, and conveyed to him the alarming threats uttered by Don Lublos. Though he always had disliked the old Spaniard, he never had supposed him capable of the depravity of mind which Emilia's narrative now exposed; and resentment for the insults offered to his wife, and fears lest they both should fall a victim to the treachery of Don Lublos, agitated him by

turns, and he lost no time in returning home and consulting a book, where he expected to find accurate information respecting the laws prohibiting the sale of gold-dust. The perusal of a few sentences convinced him that Don Lublos had asserted nothing but the truth. It may seem extraordinary that Julian should not previously have been aware of the existence of the statute in question; but having always resided in the city of Rio de Janeiro, and seen the precious metals in the form of coin only, his attention had never been directed to the subject, and even now he could hardly bring himself to believe that the exchanging of grains of gold for the necessaries of life, in a remote part of the country, too, would expose an individual to penalties so severe as imprisonment and confiscation of property.

Julian and Emilia were rather dismayed at the gloominess of their prospects, and the former tried in vain to find some circumstance that might be brought forward in mitigation of his crime, and sometimes indulged the hope that Don Lublos would not be able to prove his guilt; but when he recollected how narrowly he

had been watched by two men while on board the schooner, and recalled the particulars of their behaviour and conversation, he perceived that there would be no want of evidence to convict him.

These reflections were interrupted by cries of pain and alarm within a short distance of the house, and he hastened out to ascertain the cause of them, and perceived a negro, whom Emilia, who had followed him, easily recognized to be the Colambolo that she had relieved with food on a former occasion. His naked shoulders exhibited the marks of a whip, and one of Don Lublos's slaves had apparently been pursuing him, for he stood a little way off, with a long cane in his hand, having stopped short on Julian's coming out of the house. To the questions of the latter, he replied that the savage being who stood before them had approached his master's dwelling, and that Don Lublos, supposing that he intended to steal something, had beat him severely, and then given orders that he should be driven away, and pursued beyond the bounds of the farm. "The creature is quite harmless," said the slave, "but I was obliged to do as the Don commanded,

and to follow him thus far, though I have not once touched him with my stick."

When, in the course of this narration, the speaker happened to point to Don Lublos's house, the Colambolo expressed the most violent rage, clenching his hands, gnashing his teeth, and even throwing himself upon the ground, and rolling amongst the dust till he was so covered with it that his natural colour could not be distinguished. Julian now dismissed the slave with praises for his humanity, and motioning to the savage to seat himself in front of the door, he gave him a quantity of food which he quickly devoured, and then clapping his hands and howling, dashed off into the woods.

Three days passed in quietness with Julian and Emilia, and they began to hope that Don Lublos had become ashamed of his conduct, and had abandoned all design of further molesting them: but in this they were mistaken. He had, indeed, given up the idea of making the lady bend to his purposes, because he perceived that there was no chance of his succeeding in that, besides a risk of drawing upon himself chastisement from an incensed husband. He now turned his views

towards discovering the situation of the gold mine, from which he erroneously supposed that Julian derived daily supplies of the precious metal.

In pursuance of this design, he, one morning, despatched a slave to inform Julian that he was about to visit him on business of importance. Emilia took care to keep out of the way, and Julian received him with as much coolness and indifference as he could well assume.

"I have reason to believe," said the former, "that you have discovered a gold mine in the river. Now, as the latter runs through my property, I conceive that I have a right to a participation in the riches which the stream may produce, of whatever nature they happen to be."

"Your supposition is unfounded," replied Julian. "I am not aware of the existence of any gold mine, but even if I were, I should not think myself bound to communicate the knowledge of it to yourself."

"Be cautious what you assert," answered Don Lublos. "I can prove that you disposed of gold to the master of the American schooner that

was lately here. Are you aware of the penalties you have incurred by doing so?"

"I am," said Julian, "and also of the plan of espionage to which you subjected me, for the most treacherous of purposes. But with respect to the gold alluded to, I must inform you that it was obtained by washing the sands of the river. It is not procurable here except in small quantities."

"What an absurd fiction!" exclaimed Don Lublos. "I will not be thus imposed upon. Whoever heard of gold being procured from sand? I insist upon knowing the situation of the mass of metal to which you have been in the habit of resorting for a supply."

"I hope I misunderstand your words," answered Julian, passionately, "for they appear to accuse me of falsehood. I repeat that I am ignorant of the existence of any mine or mass of gold in this neighbourhood, and that the whole of the metal that I have ever possessed since I came here, has been drawn from the bed of the stream. It forms a precarious and a decreasing source of wealth, which a man of more generous

feelings than yourself would allow poor, ruined individuals, like my wife and myself, to cultivate without interference or interruption; but as your avarice has been excited, let me advise you to send your slaves into the channel of the stream to seek for gold, and then you will discover whether they are most profitably employed there or upon your fertile and productive estate."

"All this is very unsatisfactory," replied Don Lublos, "and, moreover, very little to the purpose. I want gold, and gold I must have. Since you will not inform me where it is to be found, yourself and your slaves must gather enough for both of us. You are entirely in my power, and therefore I shall constitute you my head miner; but, recollect, that if I perceive in you any want of diligence, or have not reason to be satisfied with the quantity of metal daily delivered to me, I shall take steps which will lead to your being sent to Rio de Janeiro, there to stand trial for defrauding government!"

"Your terms cannot be complied with," cried Julian. "How can I collect gold that does not exist? I value peace of mind far beyond wealth, and would in a moment disclose the secret of a

mine if I possessed such. I care not for the execution of your threats so far as I myself am concerned, but my Emilia—what will become of her, should I be driven from hence?"

"It is now in her power to prevent all risk of the kind," replied Don Lublos. "Persuade her to this——"

"A truce to your insulting proposals," cried Julian; "though I am in your power, I will not listen to them. Begone! and do your worst. Henceforth, there shall be no further communication between us. But if you are determined to be my foe, let it be openly, and assume courage to do those things yourself, which you have hitherto entrusted to the hands of spies and informers."

Don Lublos, who never failed to become nervous on seeing any one violently excited, particularly when he himself had caused the emotion, thought proper to retire without replying to Julian's last words; and as soon as he had left the house, Emilia hastened to her husband, to receive a detail of what had passed between the old Spaniard and himself. On learning the result of the conference, she exclaimed,—"Now are we, indeed, truly miserable! Nothing can

save us from ruin, except my submitting to what is worse than death,—or your accomplishing something like an impossibility,—the discovery of a gold mine. But, my dear Julian, let me entreat you to pursue the scheme which you proposed a few days ago. Force your way up the channel of the river, and endeavour to ascertain where the source of the gold-dust lies. Should you be successful, I will, for my own part, contentedly resign all the advantages which would accrue to us from the possession of such a piece of knowledge, and think we are happy in being able to appease Don Lublos, even at the expense of those prospects of future prosperity which it would reasonably give birth to and encourage. The state of fear and suspense in which we have lived during the last few days is intolerable. I will assist you in seeking for a mine, or at least the semblance of one; for to dupe and deceive our persecutor is, in my opinion, perfectly justifiable, and his ignorance will render this not very difficult. But we must first obtain security from the monster, for his word cannot be depended upon, that we shall continue free from

molestation, after we have satisfied his wishes." Julian acknowledged the justness of Emilia's views of their situation, but regarded the means which she proposed for their relief as of too improbable attainment to deserve serious attention; and the perplexed and afflicted pair felt utterly at a loss where to found any rational hopes of extrication from the difficulties that now surrounded them.

Two days after this, Emilia was standing upon the edge of the bank of the river, opposite to the house. Hearing a human voice below, she looked downwards, and saw the Colambolo making his way up the precipice, and waving his arm as if to attract her attention. Having succeeded in this, he stopped and held out his hand, and beckoned Emilia to approach him, at the same time pointing up the river. She had now ceased to view him with either terror or dislike, and her curiosity being excited, she descended towards the place where he stood, and soon got near enough to perceive that he had in his hand a piece of gold. He offered it to her, and again pointed up the stream, and endeavoured, by

gestures that could not be mistaken, to inform her that more of the metal was to be found in that direction.

Emilia's heart fluttered with delighted expectation, and her first resolution was to follow the Colambolo, wherever he might lead her, but it soon occurred to her that Julian's company would be desirable, were it only that he might assist her in getting over the impediments which existed in the channel of the river. Motioning to the savage to wait till her return, she was about to go towards the house, but he immediately perceived her design, and opposed it with violent gesticulations, and a most resolute shaking of the head. Emilia thought that it would be very imprudent in her to offend one who apparently had both the power and the inclination to confer a great benefit upon her, and collecting all her firmness, she determined to trust herself unprotected to the guidance of the Colambolo.

When made sensible of her design, he assumed a cheerful air, and hastened onwards so fast that she could hardly keep pace with him, active and elastic as she naturally was. As they

advanced up the bed of the river, their progress became slower, on account of the difficulty of the path, and the caution that was necessary to avoid falling, for the rocks were both sharp and slippery. In some places the cliffs rose from the edge of the stream as perpendicularly as a wall, leaving only a narrow ledge for the footsteps of those who might be bold enough to pass that way; and under these circumstances, Emilia was obliged to hold by any projecting points that might present themselves on the face of the rock on one side, that she might save herself from dropping into the deep gloomy pool or foaming agitated torrent, that would lie within a few inches of her feet, upon the other. The further they proceeded, the narrower and more sinuous did the channel of the stream become, and at length its confining cliffs over-arched its bed, and nearly met overhead; the trees which grew upon their summits intermingling their branches, and nearly excluding the light, and obstructing the view of the sky. Here the strata on either side exhibited the most extraordinary disruptions and contortions; in some places running horizontally a few hundred feet, and then

darting upwards or downwards at right angles to their previous courses, or moulding themselves into serpentine convolutions of brilliant colours, and after a series of fantastic windings, plunging suddenly into the substance of the supporting cliff, and totally disappearing. The bands of light which darted through occasional open spaces amongst the trees overhead, frequently happened to strike across these variegated strata, and the reflection thrown off by their surfaces, mingling with the rays of the sun, produced a confused sort of medium, which affected the outline and appearance of every surrounding object. The continuity of the cliffs upon both sides of the river was occasionally broken by the occurrence of narrow chasms, which extended further back than the eye could reach, though the noises proceeding from their extremities, and the blasts of chilling spray that issued from their mouths, told that each had a concealed torrent meandering through its recesses.

The dangers of the way, the terrible character of the scene, and her unprotected condition, filled Emilia with a confused sort of terror, but also inspired a desperate firmness, which enabled

her to advance without much assistance from the Colambolo, who preserved the utmost calmness and indifference during their perilous journey, and did not seem to perceive that there was any thing extraordinary in their situation. After nearly two hours' progress, and when Emilia had lost her shoes, and hurt her hands, and was utterly spent with fatigue, they reached the bottom of a cataract, about thirty feet in height, which she rejoiced to perceive would effectually prevent their advancing any further, for the cliffs upon each side joined the edge of the precipice over which the water fell, forming a semicircle, every part of which seemed equally perpendicular and inaccessible. Here, to her astonishment, the Colambolo suddenly vanished from her sight, nor could she imagine what had become of him, till examining more narrowly, she discovered him standing under and within the shoot of the cataract, its impetus projecting it so much beyond the rock over which it rushed as to leave space enough for a person to walk between the two without being much wetted by the spray. Her guide beckoned to her to approach him, which she did, and he directed her attention to

a cavity in the rock, about half way within the passage, and extending considerably upwards and backwards. The Colambolo thrust his arm into it, and soon drew forth a spiral-shaped piece of gold, of very considerable weight, and great apparent purity, and presented it to Emilia. She received it with ecstasy, and he continued to detach successive portions, though not without difficulty, till she had as much as she could well carry, considering the nature of the road by which she was to return homewards. She therefore now requested him to desist from removing any more of the precious metal, intimating by signs that she would return to the place at some future time. Having secured her precious cargo, she pointed down the river, and he preceded her as formerly, and conducted her in safety to that part of the stream from whence they had set out in the morning; and signifying that he should visit the house next day, went off into the woods without further parley.

Emilia reached her dwelling, as she imagined, unperceived by any one; and having deposited the gold in a place of safety, she hastened to Julian, who was as usual at work upon the farm.

She did not communicate her good fortune till they had got within doors, and then she suddenly displayed to him the masses of precious metal, and gave a rapid recital of the events of the morning. He had scarcely time to utter his first exclamations of rapture and astonishment before the door suddenly opened, and Don Lublos entered the room. "Ha!" cried he to Julian, "what wonders have been worked by those threats which a few days ago you affected so much to despise! You have shewn commendable zeal in seeking for a mine. You have only now discovered it, I suppose. Well, well, I am still in time to receive a share. Do you propose to sell any more gold?"

Don Lublos had observed Emilia's rencontre with the Colambolo in the morning, and seeing them proceed up the river together, his curiosity was excited, and he had watched their return, when the small but heavy burthen which she carried told, too plainly, what had formed the object of her excursion. Determined to confirm his belief, by the evidence of his own senses, he had now burst in upon the parties, and obtained ocular demonstration of what he had so long

suspected. He now repeated his former threats, and insisted upon obtaining full and undivided possession of the mine, promising however to allow Julian to keep the gold that was now in his hands, provided the source from which it had been procured should appear likely to afford a tolerable supply of the metal for some time to come. To this the former, hopeless of bringing his persecutor to more favourable terms, at length agreed, under condition that Don Lublos should give him a bond for two thousand piastres, as a security that he never would lay an information against him for having trafficked in gold-dust. Julian having declared that the Colambolo had guided his wife to the mine, and alone knew its exact situation, it was agreed that the savage should be requested to conduct them there on the following day, when he made his promised visit to Julian's house.

Next morning Don Lublos entered the abode of Julian and Emilia at a much earlier hour than seemed necessary; and his looks of triumphant expectation were particularly disagreeable to the two latter, who did not feel disposed to converse with him, or pay him the least attention.

However, he was in nowise restrained by the coldness of their manners, but remarked to Emilia that he expected that she would accompany the party up the river, as the Colambolo would be more likely to attend to her orders than to those of any other person. But the truth is that Don Lublos, in making this proposal, had an eye to his own safety; for he well knew that neither Julian nor the guide were favourably disposed towards him, and he trembled lest either the one or the other should, in the course of the excursion, inflict vengeance upon him, which his unprotectedness would enable them easily to do. The presence of Emilia might, he conceived, go far to deter them from any outrage of the kind; and even supposing they did attempt it, he was certain that she would generously intercede for him, and disarm them of their wrath. Such were the reflections of a mind to which meanness and treachery had long been familiar in every shape, and which possessed neither courage itself, nor that confidence in the honour of others which the quality seldom fails to inspire, in those to whom it belongs.

Julian objected to Emilia's accompanying them on this expedition, for he was aware from her description of her journey of the preceding day, that the fatigue would prove very great; but the discussion of this point was interrupted by the arrival of the Colambolo, and Don Lublos immediately went out to him, and taking a piece of gold in one hand, and pointing up the river with the other, made him understand that he wished to be conducted to the mine. But the Colambolo, instead of expressing his willingness to accede to the request, became violently enraged, and waved Don Lublos from him, with looks of abhorrence and resentment. Julian and Emilia had now reached the spot, and the savage, on seeing the latter, forgot his anger, and when she repeated the signs which Don Lublos had used, his replying gestures indicated his readiness to do what was proposed. The necessity of Emilia's proceeding up the river now became evident, and neither she nor her husband longer hesitated respecting the propriety of the measure. However, the Colambolo, when he perceived that Don Lublos was to form one of the party, became disobedient and refractory;

and it was not until Emilia had employed all her art and address in appeasing him, that he would go on, which he at length did, after throwing a demoniac glance at the former, and whirling his stick several times round his head, and leaping wildly into the air.

It will be useless to enter into the details of their progress up to the bed of the river. All those dangers and difficulties which Emilia has been described as having encountered on the preceding day, were experienced in the same degree; and Julian could not but regard with admiration the courage which she had displayed upon that occasion. Under any other circumstances, Don Lublos would have afforded a subject of ridicule; for he could hardly keep up with his companions, and was so nervous and timid that, when the path happened to be narrow, or the stones slippery, he was unable to advance, without Julian's assistance; and having once or twice fallen into shallow water, he shivered as if he had an ague, and looked so drenched and woe-begone that the former viewed him more as an object of contempt than of resentment.

On their reaching the cataract, the Colambolo conducted Don Lublos between the sheet of water and the rock, and showed him the cavity from which the gold had been extracted. While he was engaged in examining this, the savage waved to Julian and Emilia to stand close under the precipice on one side of the river, and then throwing his *lasso* with great dexterity, attached one end of it to a large bough of a tree overhanging the stream, immediately above the edge of the fall. Winding the other round his body, he slung himself up as high as the branch, and with so much rapidity that he appeared to shoot through the air. In one moment more, he had dropped himself into the middle of the river, and he now stood within a few feet of the edge of the cataract, and immediately above Don Lublos. A great rock toppled on the verge of the precipice; he applied his whole strength to push it forwards; it began to give way with a thundering noise:—"Stop, monster, stop!" exclaimed Julian. "Don Lublos, hasten hither!" shrieked Emilia——.

It was too late. The stone rolled down upon its victim, and crushed him. His senseless

form was once tossed upwards among the wreaths of foam that encircled the basin of the cataract, and quickly sunk, not to rise again. The Colambolo saw this, and uttering a wild howl of satisfaction, and a hoarse and ferocious laugh, regained the bank of the river, and dashed into the neighbouring woods.

Julian, on recovering a little from the shock of horror which the scene had produced, found himself standing close to the cliffs, and holding his Emilia's hands. She was cold and agitated, and he began to fear that she would scarcely be able to encounter the fatigue of their journey homewards; but his attention was now drawn to the sound of voices among the rocks above him, and on looking up, he perceived, to his surprise and satisfaction, his three slaves, all of whom having become alarmed for the safety of their master and mistress, had followed the course of the river in search of them, and been happily led to discover where they were, at the time when they required assistance. The negro woman had brought along with her some refreshments, and of these Julian and Emilia partook, without delay.

The stone projected over the edge of the cataract by the Colambolo, had, in its descent, broken away a considerable part of the rock in which the mine was situated, and several large veins of native gold were now exposed to view, one of which, having been embedded in a soft matrix which the torrent had suddenly washed away, projected and branched forth like an elegant tree. This Julian separated from the rock, and presented to Emilia. The slaves also carried away a large quantity of metal, both on that, and on several succeeding days; and Julian and Emilia soon found themselves in possession of the means of returning to Rio de Janeiro, and resuming their former style of life there.

THE END.

G. Woodfall, Printer, Angel Court, Skinner Street, London.

NEW WORKS

PREPARING FOR PUBLICATION BY

HENRY COLBURN AND RICHARD BENTLEY,

NEW BURLINGTON STREET.

I.

THE HEIRESS of BRUGES: a Tale. By the Author of "HIGHWAYS AND BYWAYS," "TRAITS OF TRAVEL," &c. In 3 vols. post 8vo.

II.

WEDDED LIFE in the UPPER RANKS. In 2 vols. post 8vo.

III.

THE OXONIANS; or, A GLANCE AT SOCIETY. By the Author of the "ROUE'." In 3 vols. post 8vo.

IV.

FRASCATIS. In 2 vols. post 8vo.

V.

SIR RALPH ESHER; or, MEMOIRS OF A GENTLEMAN OF THE COURT OF CHARLES II. In 3 vols. post 8vo.

VI.

CARWELL; or, CRIME AND SORROW. In 1 vol. post 8vo.

VII.

MAXWELL. By the Author of "SAYINGS AND DOINGS." In 3 vols. post 8vo.

VIII.

WALTER COLYTON. By the Author of "BRAMBLETYE HOUSE," &c. &c. In 3 vols. post 8vo.

IX.

SCENES of LIFE and SHADES of CHARACTER. In 2 vols. post 8vo.

X.

THE ENGLISH AT HOME. By the Author of "THE ENGLISH IN ITALY," "THE ENGLISH IN FRANCE," &c. In 3 vols. post 8vo.

XI.

GERTRUDE. A Tale of the Sixteenth Century. In 2 vols. post 8vo.

XII.

THE KING'S OWN. A Tale of the Sea. By the Author of "THE NAVAL OFFICER." In 3 vols. post 8vo.

LATELY PUBLISHED.

XIII.

DEVEREUX. By the Author of "PELHAM," and "THE DISOWNED." In 3 vols. post 8vo.

XIV.

THE NEW FOREST. By the Author of "BRAMBLETYE HOUSE," &c. In 3 vols. post 8vo.

XV.

OLD COURT. A Novel. In 3 vols. post 8vo.

"This romance is the work of a very able pen. The characters are strongly, we had almost said pictorally, conceived; and the thoughts are condensed and masculine."—*Court Journal.*

XVI.

TALES of an INDIAN CAMP. By J. A. JONES, Esq. In 3 vols. post 8vo.

"The public, we are assured, may depend on the accuracy of the picture drawn of the American Indians and of their actual mode of life at the present day, the author having by extraordinary circumstances been thrown amongst them in his early youth, having been initiated into their habits, and moreover having resided with them for many years in after-life. The genius of the writer, we understand, was first discovered by the author of Gertrude of Wyoming, who has expressed his conviction of the extreme interest of the present production, and its high importance and value in an historical point of view."—*Globe.*

XVII.

TALES of MY TIME. By the Author of "BLUE STOCKING HALL." In 3 vols. post 8vo.